

A COLLECTIVE BIOGRAPHY OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE AMERICAN  
ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

A DISSERTATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

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BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

MUNCIE, INDIANA

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**ABSTRACT**

**DISSERTATION:** A Collective Biography of the Founders of the American Association of University Women

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This archival study used constructivist grounded theory to document the educational and professional lives of seventeen women who founded the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) in 1881, which later became known as the American Association of University Women (AAUW). This study resulted in a collective biography of the seventeen women which describes how they gained access to higher education; how they developed careers in higher education; the relationships between the subjects; and what lasting contributions they made to education for women and women's place in American society. Several of the subjects struggled to afford higher education as well as gain access to institutions of higher learning. They worked within the established system to create space for women by focusing on areas of learning that were of little interest to their male counterparts. The data revealed that the women were connected through their volunteer work in women's organizations and through their duties as faculty and administrators in institutions of higher education. By strategic use of their positions they

advanced access to educational and professional opportunities for women by developing a network of women in the field of education including colleagues, students, and women's organizations. This network was, in part, developed by teaching practices that included extensive mentoring of students who eventually became colleagues within the network.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

I became interested in the women who founded the American Association of University Women (AAUW) during a visit to the organization's website in 2009 (<http://www.aauw.org>). At that time, on the portion of the website dedicated to the history of the AAUW, I saw a photograph (see below) of a group of women seated around a luncheon table dressed in what appeared to be the clothing women wore in the 1940s or 1950s. They were not wearing hats as was the custom for women in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The flowers visible on the table in this photograph were in a vase exactly like one my mother had when I was a child in the 1950s. The photograph caption claimed that this was a picture of a meeting of the founders. I knew the organization was founded in the 1880s so it seemed likely that the picture was misidentified. After some thought and research, I sent an email to the AAUW inquiring about this photograph and the claim that it was a meeting of the founders. I received no reply. A few weeks later, I sent another email and again, received no response. However, the photograph was soon removed from the website historical timeline and my question continued to go unanswered. Currently, the website reports that they are working on preserving and making accessible more than 800 boxes of records and artifacts that are in the AAUW collection.



AAUW Archives, Washington, DC

(Currently identified as AAUW Legislative Program Committee)

By now, I was interested in solving this mystery. I put a copy of the photograph on my computer desktop and looked at these women every time I opened my computer. Who were these women? Who were the actual founders of the AAUW and why did they create this particular organization? My research led to a book on the history of the AAUW published in 1931. That book, *The History of the American Association of University Women*, was written by AAUW founder Marion Talbot, Dean of Women at the University of Chicago, and Lois Kimball Mathews Rosenberry, Dean of Women at

the University of Wisconsin from 1911–1918. This book became the foundation of my search to locate and understand the 17 women who gathered together to form this organization for women. The love of education and strong desire, almost need, to learn in spite of personal and societal roadblocks that permeated the first few pages of this book struck a personal chord with me. Additionally, their work to give women access to higher education appealed to my interest in women's issues in the field of higher education. I wondered what path led women from as far away from Massachusetts as Wisconsin to that meeting on that particular day in Boston.

The women, who attended that first meeting on November 28, 1881 (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931), are listed, along with their alma maters and dates of graduation, in Table 1 below. I have chosen to list the institutions in alphabetical order since the graduation dates may be different for one or more of the graduates for each institution. Each institution's graduates' names are also alphabetized by last name for easy location.

Table 1

*Undergraduate Institutions Attended and Date of Graduation*

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Names</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Boston University Boston, MA	Sarah L. Miner Marion Talbot	1877 1880
Cornell University Ithaca, NY	Mary H. Ladd	1875
Oberlin College Oberlin, OH	Ellen A. Hayes Anna E. F. Morgan Margaret E. Stratton	1878 1866 1878
Smith College Northampton, MA	S. Alice Brown	1881
University of Michigan Ann Arbor, MI	Lucy C. Andrews Alice E. Freeman Mary O. Marston	1876 1876 1877
University of Wisconsin Madison, WI	Maria M. Dean Almah F. Frisby	1880 1878
Vassar College Poughkeepsie, NY	Florence M. Cushing Alice Hayes Ellen H. Swallow	1874 1881 1881
Wellesley College Wellesley, MA	Harriet C. Blake Edith E. Metcalf	1880 1880

*Note:* Last names are maiden names since that is how they were registered.

The search for these women led me to the literature concerning higher education for women during the Victorian, 1837-1901, and Progressive eras, 1890-1920, the lives of American women during those periods, and the forging of new universities as Americans moved west and created new communities. These women led diverse lives in many different locations across the country but remained connected through their work in the AAUW and as leaders in higher education for women. This study examined and recorded the collective biography of the professional lives and accomplishments of the seventeen women who founded the AAUW; and through the power of an organized association further opened the gates of higher education. Women students, like me, continue to be the beneficiaries of the work these women were collectively engaged in and the legacy of the AAUW remains significant, yet under studied in the history of higher education.

### **Problem Statement**

At her mother's suggestion, Marion Talbot, in consultation with Ellen H. Richards, her friend and teacher, "issued a call to all the college women they knew -few indeed in that day – to meet on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1881, in the hospitable halls of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology" (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931, p. 9). They met to consider the idea that "in the young but rapidly growing body of women college graduates of the country lay great power for the promotion of the educational interests of women" (Talbot, M., 1903, A. F. Palmer papers, Pamphlets. Wellesley College Archives). At this meeting, Alice Freeman Palmer, acting president of Wellesley College moved "that a meeting be called for the purpose of organizing an association of women college graduates, with headquarters in Boston" (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931, p. 10).

The mission of this organization, which became known as the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA), was to give women support and direction after graduation in a world that was not prepared for college educated women. Each woman had to forge a career for herself with little direction or history to guide her. As Lerner (2009) stated “The educational disadvantaging and deprivation of women spans several millennia and has changed only relatively recently” (pp. 8-9). The ACA provided these women with a network and mentoring system, as well as a voice, which helped them change their lives as well as the attitude of society toward the role women can play in society (Lerner, 2009). However, little is known about the development of the educational and professional lives of these women who formed an association that eventually became a nationwide, much revered, organization known today as the American Association of University Women (AAUW).

Although these women led productive, complicated lives as leaders in the fields of higher education and community activism, many of their contributions have not been reported or noted in the history of higher education in America. Palmieri (1995) pointed out that historians have not often considered the educational and professional lives of women as “worthy of study” (p. xvi). Lerner (2009) added that “emphasis on the ‘great man’ omits women, minorities, many of the actual agents of social change” (p. 10). This omission results in an erroneous historical account of social change which makes it difficult to understand how to engage in addressing the problems of society by today’s citizens (Lerner, 2009). As so often happens with women, the stories of these women, agents of social and educational change, have languished in dusty archives, often



uncatalogued and all but forgotten. In addition, the path to their success has not been examined or, in some cases, recorded.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to gather data housed in various archives across the country with the aim of recording and analyzing a history of the educational and professional lives of the seventeen women who founded the American Association of University Women. Currently, a historical treatment of this particular group does not exist. This study includes the impact of society on the choices they made as well as the many contributions they made to society and higher education for women. In addition, this study offers a comprehensive narration of the professional lives of the members of the founding committee. As Eisenmann (2004) pointed out, historical research in the field of higher education provides both a foundation for understanding the present and building blocks for creating the future. George Herbert Palmer, 1842-1933, the husband of Wellesley College president and Association of Collegiate Alumnae founder, Alice Freeman Palmer, 1855-1902, provides the following rationale for why women like his wife ought to be included in the historical record:

In some of the social movements of her time Mrs. Palmer had a considerable share. During her life education was undergoing reconstruction, new colleges were coming into existence, fresh opportunities and capacities for women were being claimed and tested. It is well to follow such movements in the lives of their leaders and to understand the situation in which those leaders found themselves. By sharing in their early hopes, difficulties, and results, we comprehend better the world we inhabit (Palmer, 1908, p. 5).

Over a hundred years later, the accomplishments of these seventeen women and the roles they played in the “reconstruction of education” and gender roles for both men and women have not been adequately and cogently recorded or effectively interpreted.

### **Research Questions**

Given this significant gap in the literature, this study focused on the following central research questions:

1. How will archival data reveal a more comprehensive narrative of the educational and professional lives of the founders of the AAUW?
2. How were these women able to develop professional careers in higher education given the social restraints of their time?
3. What professional and social connections brought these women together and what kind of relationships existed between the women?
4. What contributions did each of these women make to society and higher education?

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study employed feminist standpoint theory (Beard, 1946; Harding, 2004; Hartsock, 1998) as a theoretical framework. Collins (1997) defined feminist standpoint theory as “an interpretive framework dedicated to explicating how knowledge remains central to maintaining and changing unjust systems of power” (p. 375). She further argued that standpoint is an historical experience shared by a group. Feminist thought has traditionally followed the cultural pattern of assuming that theories are universal, thus lumping all women together. This approach led to a distortion of history (Lerner, 2009) and created a backlash among women whose life experience does not reflect a particular feminist rhetoric. Beard (1946) argued that the history of women must include the

varying standpoints of women from all socioeconomic classes, cultures, and races.

Feminist standpoint theory is an attempt to address that issue. Lerner further argued that “the biographer must recreate the life and times of a subject from within the subject’s own consciousness and from the context of her time” (p. 15). In other words, in order to understand the motivations, choices, and actions of these women, the researcher must attempt to “stand in their shoes” by studying primary sources left behind like so many clues leading to a deeper understanding of their educational and professional lives. In addition, the researcher should gain an understanding of the social and political conditions of the world in which the subjects of the study lived.

The standpoint of these women was affected by class, gender, and education as well as by the societal role considered proper for women during the time period in which they lived. This standpoint, at times, stood in opposition to my standpoint as a researcher who is also a feminist living in the first part of the twenty-first century. By employing this theoretical framework, I was able to better understand the viewpoints and actions of the subjects of this study.

### **Rationale**

Clifford (1989) stated “To continue the task of historical recovery requires many more biographies of individual women and collective studies of academic women in varying kinds of institutions and different eras” (p, 37). This study fits another piece into the mosaic of the history of women’s educational experiences in America. Lerner (2009) claimed “Women’s History needs to continue the work of finding, reviving, and recording the missing history of half the U. S. population” (p. 173). In addition, the results of this study help us understand how women who managed to obtain higher

education in the latter half of the nineteenth century contributed to society and forged a path for women who came after them. Lerner has argued that “women’s thought could be grounded in women’s own experience” (p. 7) and she pointed out that “more scholarship is needed in the intellectual history of women” (p. 177). Alpern, Antler, Perry, and Scobie (1992) argued that “A group without a history is a group without an identity. By creating a history of women, historians do more than reconstruct the past in new ways. They transform the possibilities in women’s present and future” (p. 21). This addition to the history of women in higher education, as well as a better understanding of their interpersonal and professional relationships, will assist today’s women as they choose educational pathways leading to success in their chosen professional careers.

### **Summary**

This qualitative constructivist grounded theory study uses a feminist standpoint theoretical framework to document, explore, and interpret the lives of the founders of the American Association of University Women. Chapter two reviews the literature on the history of education for women, the history of the American Association of University Women, feminist standpoint theory, constructivist grounded theory, and historical archival research. Chapter three describes the method used for this study including research design, population, sample, data collection strategies, and data analysis processes. Chapter four is a presentation and arrangement of the findings of this study and Chapter five concludes the study with a discussion of the findings in relation to the methodological and content related literature, implications of the findings, and recommendations for further study.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

Prior to the second half of the nineteenth century, there were few, if any, formally recognized avenues for girls to prepare for higher education (Hunt, 1912). Kendall (1976) claimed that education for girls in America, prior to 1818 was little more than “their mother’s knee” (p. 9). Nevertheless, there was an early nineteenth century movement led by women such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Emma Willard, Catherine Beecher, and Mary Lyon advocating for women’s education. Female education could be justified because it prepared women to raise sons who were good citizens of a newly formed republic (Gordon, 1990; Palmieri, 1997; Solomon, 1985). Religious leaders saw value in women learning to read so they could read the Bible which led to acceptance of female teachers (Solomon, 1985). These arguments proved useful for women advocating for access to quality education for girls.

These facts make it clear that at that time, American society did not intend, and probably could not even imagine a reason for young women to go to university. At best, women were allowed to attend normal schools and seminaries in order to prepare for teaching children, which was viewed as merely an extension of the domestic realm rather than a profession outside the home (Gordon, 1990; Solomon, 1985).

The education available to women had little in common with education offered to their brothers. Taylor (1914) characterized advanced education for women as The Ladies Course, the Teachers' Course, or the English Course, all of which "... cover a multitude of concessions to lower standards, less preparation, and smaller results, than existed in the colleges for men (p. 4).

Public schools were considered an optional service provided by local townships with no specific standards as to how much schooling was offered or who could attend (Kendall, 1975). In fact, in many American cities such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston, girls could not be prepared for college in a public high school, in part, because neither Latin nor foreign languages were taught in those institutions (Boas, 1935; Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931). Boston opened a girls' high school in 1826 but closed it two years later due to the unexpected numbers of girls who enrolled, and did not open another high school for girls for another twenty years (Kendall, 1975).

In contrast, young men who wanted to prepare for college had a wide choice of "Latin Schools" specifically aimed at college preparation for boys (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931). Before the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, young women were sent to finishing school, often run by religious groups (Kendall, 1975), where they would learn the skills necessary to run a God-fearing household and support a husband and children in their endeavors. Gordon (1990) described the role of women during the Victorian era as follows:

Victorian sex roles, and in particular the cult of domesticity, glorified the responsibilities of home and sentimentalized motherhood. Separate spheres allowed women no political voice, limited economic options, and few legal

rights, even concerning their sacred duty of mothering. Clearly men held the reins of power. (p. 13)

Seminaries for women which began to appear in the early 1800s were a major move forward for education for women (Solomon, 1985; Taylor, 1914). Some of the better seminaries for girls included Catherine Beecher's school in Hartford established in 1822; Mary Lyon's Seminary at Holyoke opened in 1837; and the Troy Seminary operated by Emma Willard beginning in 1821 (Goodsell, 1923; Gordon, 1990; Kendall, 1975). Both Willard and the Beecher sisters saw the need for properly educated teachers (Goodsell, 1923). Lyon believed that women should "Acquire knowledge that you may do good" (quoted by Hazard, 1925, p. 38). In a speech given in 1905 at the commencement exercises at Western College for Women in Ohio, Caroline Hazard, 1871-1939, President of Wellesley College from 1899-1910 argued "And the person who of all others in America brought the idea of intellectual equality, of equality for opportunity to study for both young men and women, the pioneer of the movement, the leading spirit who ushered in a new day, was Mary Lyon" (1925, p. 25).

However, parents still insisted that their daughters' studies should prepare them for housewifery and the raising of children. The Beecher sisters taught chemistry and mathematics at the Hartford Seminary but according to Kendall (1975) they assured parents that these skills were applicable in the kitchen and were meant to be useful in overseeing a household, thereby, gaining access to the sciences for their students.

Of the three, the Troy Seminary was the most successful (Kendall, 1975). Willard's educational plan for women included a continuous course of education for

women which addressed “. . . the physical and intellectual, moral and spiritual conditions” (Taylor, 1914, p. 6). Solomon (1985) stated:

The Willard Plan called for a liberal arts curriculum incorporating some essentials from men’s colleges, but classes were to be taught by women exclusively.

Willard’s request rested on the cogent argument that the well-being of the republic demanded educated mothers (p. 18).

Taylor, as well as Kendall (1975), asserted that Willard’s plan was one of the major influences that led to better education for women. Like the Beecher sisters, according to Mulvihill (1999)

Emma often reassured the public that her educational design was in service to the larger national mission of securing the longevity of the Republic while providing young women with necessary life skills. She extended the concept of Republican Motherhood into an educational design (pp. 82-83).

Despite the efforts of women like Lyon, Willard and the Beechers, the seminary education for girls, though much improved was still a long way from the college education available for young men. So-called “colleges for women” such as New Washington in Mississippi, were founded, mostly in the south and Midwest but were little more than seminaries aimed at preparing women to be good wives and mothers (Goodsell, 1923; Taylor, 1914). Nevertheless, Gordon (1997) argued that the seminaries served the purpose of “paving the way for women’s higher education” (p. 475).

A major step forward in women’s education occurred in 1833 when Oberlin College in Ohio opened its doors to both men and women of all races (Solomon, 1985). Oberlin College was the first coeducational institution of higher learning in the United



States and the founders planned to educate women within the separate spheres tradition. For the first time, a Female Department was established, headed by graduates of seminaries like Troy or Mount Holyoke (Solomon, 1985).

The old argument, that seminary education for females was simply preparation for motherhood was not as convincing when used to justify a coeducational institution of higher learning. Many argued that women attending college would violate the separation of the sexes norm described as “separate spheres” as well as destroy the connection between education and the proper role of women, which was domesticity (Gordon, 1990). Both conventions were threatened since it was assumed that women with degrees would want to enter the professions with their male counterparts (Gordon, 1990). Boas (1935) reported “It was customary to deplore the mere suggestion of degrees for women, as ostentatious aping of man. A woman with a degree would be unsexed, since by divine will woman was assigned to domestic duties” (p. 11).

In spite of this social climate and generally inadequate educational opportunities, some young women were able to prepare for college on their own, with tutors, or in the few seats reserved for the daughters of the intellectually and socially elite, in private high schools. A few years after Oberlin College began offering coeducation, Boston University (1839) opened a College of Liberal Arts with the intention of admitting women as well as men (Solomon, 1985). The problem remained that girls could not get access to the necessary college preparation that would allow them to meet the entrance requirements. Even Marion Talbot, whose father, the Dean of the Boston University Medical School, had attempted to prepare her for the entrance requirements, was not able to meet the entrance standards. However, through her father’s influence she was

admitted to the winter term in 1876, with the condition that she catch up with the requirements as well as the work she missed in the fall term (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931).

Graduation from a university did not solve all the problems of Talbot and the other women who were some of the first women to be accepted into the halls of institutions of higher learning. In fact, it could be said that their educations created additional problems for these women. They were now educated and not willing to accept the limited roles of housewife and mother assigned to women. Talbot and her friends found themselves with newly minted degrees but no place to apply what they had learned. Solomon (1985) described this as the “After college, what?” question (p. xix). Their options were still narrowed by their gender in a society with firmly delineated roles for each gender. These women were looking for a place to use their education that allowed them to also fulfill the duties of that role. At the suggestion of her mother, Talbot contacted her friends, including Ellen H. Swallow Richards, 1842-1911, who was elected chair of the founding meeting of the ACA with sixteen other female graduates of eight different colleges (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931). The agenda was to find ways they could utilize their education in service to other women and society in general.

From this meeting, what was to become the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA), later the American Association of University Women (AAUW) was born. In addition, these women, and their colleagues from each of their institutions of higher learning, formed a network of women in higher education that reached every corner of American higher education and opened doors for female students that are still standing open for women today. In fact, women who attended college between 1865 and 1890

have been identified as the pioneers of women's higher education (Gordon, 1990; Solomon, 1985). Women such as Talbot, Richards, and the other founders of the AAUW became the female faculty, and in some cases, administrators of colleges and universities across America during the Progressive Era, 1890-1920; an era that served as "a bridge between Victorian and modern America" (Gordon, 1990, p. 1).

### **History of the American Association of University Women**

There is little written about the history of the AAUW which provides a cogent picture of that organization. Most of the data comes from Marion Talbot's histories, written at various times throughout her life. Other snippets of historical interest have been collected from AAUW records that are scattered in various archival collections. Even less attention has been given to the founders of the organization.

According to Talbot and Rosenberry (1931), at that first meeting it was decided that one woman from each university would serve on a committee convened with the purpose of inviting a wider audience to the next meeting of women interested in forming an organization for female college graduates. Sixty-five women attended the meeting held on January 14, 1882 at the Chauncy Hall School in Boston (Talbot and Rosenberry, 1931).

At this meeting, a constitution was crafted and the newly born organization was named the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA). Article II of the constitution stated that "The object of this Association shall be to unite alumnae of different institutions for practical educational work" (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931, p. 12). The ACA was open to "Any woman who has received a degree in Arts, Philosophy, Science

or Literature, from any college, university or scientific school, which may be approved by the unanimous vote of the Executive Committee” (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931, p. 12).

Talbot and Rosenberry (1931) recalled that they began meeting with their acquaintances who were residing in the Boston area, thereby, the alma maters of these women were the first institutions to be accepted by the Executive Committee. Not long after the first meeting, members began submitting other institutions for membership with Wesleyan University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) becoming the first two to be additionally accepted.

The first area of interest for the ACA was, according to Talbot, women’s health because one of the major objections to women in higher education was that it was detrimental to their health since the delicate female constitution could not stand the strain of intense study (Talbot, M., 1854-1935, *Changing Education in a Changing World*, notes on speech at Gauthier College, June, 1931, University of Chicago Archives and Special Collections). The second issue addressed by the ACA was admission to graduate schools for women. At that time, only four members had graduate degrees and the issue was brought to the forefront by Helen Magill, 1853-1944, who was the first woman to receive the doctor of philosophy degree (received from Boston University, 1877) in the United States (Helen Magill White, *Encyclopedia Britannica.com*). The ACA addressed this problem by establishing fellowships for women in graduate programs, the first of which was awarded in 1884. Talbot also pointed out in her Gauthier College address (1931) that originally the ACA focused only on higher education for women but by 1931 the focus had shifted to all areas and levels of education.

As word spread about this fledgling organization, women began to ask for permission to form “branches” of the ACA in other areas of the country. In October, 1883, the membership voted to establish a branch in Chicago. On October 25, 1884, Article VI was added to the constitution which established rules for forming branch associations. Soon thereafter, there were branches of the ACA in Washington D.C., Philadelphia, New York, and as far west as California (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931). This Boston-based organization had become a national organization in less than five years. By 1886 the ACA boasted more than 400 members (Register of the ACA, 1886).

In 1899, after a difficult campaign led by Lois K. Rodenberry for the ACA and Mary Leal Harkness, president of the Southern Association of College Women (SACW) an alliance was formed between the two organizations. Established in 1903 by Elizabeth Colton, 1872-1924, the SACW was focused on raising the academic standards of southern women’s colleges (Gordon, 1990). The two organizations merged (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931) forming The American Association of University Women, which has grown into an active force in supporting women throughout the modern world. Nearly 130 years after that first meeting, the AAUW website reports 100,000 members, 1,000 branches, and more than 500 institutional partnerships with the mission of “advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research” (Our Mission, AAUW.org, 2013).

Talbot and the other women who convened in 1881 with the purpose of founding an organization for women in higher education happened to be born at the exact right time in history for women who had the desire to pursue higher education. Solomon (1985) reported that between the 1850s and 1870s several institutions of higher learning

aimed at educating women were founded. These institutions included “the private women’s college, the religiously oriented coeducational college, the private coordinate women’s college, the secular coeducational college, both public and private, and the public single-sex vocational institution” (p. 47). Nevertheless, women’s colleges were viewed as second-tier and access for women to the prestigious universities was severely limited, at best (Solomon, 1985).

The following section of this literature review is focused on feminist standpoint theory which will be employed as a framework for the rest of the study. Next, the literature on archival historical research is reviewed followed by a short discussion of online archives.

### **Feminist Standpoint Theory**

Feminist standpoint theory is an adaptation of Marxian class theory combined with standpoint theory to meet the needs of feminist theory. Standpoint theory, according to Foley and Valezuela (2005), replaces the idea of a universal truth or viewpoint with a “historically and culturally situated standpoint” (p. 218). In fact, standpoint theory argues that it is impossible to speak from one specific standpoint and tell the whole story.

Feminist standpoint theory goes one step further and attempts to give voice to oppressed groups, particularly women, who have historically been understood through the lens of a patriarchal societal viewpoint. In other words, the story of women and their accomplishments, roles, and philosophy, if they are recorded at all, are the stories of women as interpreted by men. As a result, the voices of women have been silenced or distorted. As Harding (2004) noted, when given voice, the experiences of an oppressed group provide new and different knowledge which enriches our understanding of that

group, society, and even ourselves. Scott (1999) goes further, arguing that giving voice to segments of society that have been left out of history inherently changes history. Feminist researchers have attempted to rewrite history by compiling a “herstory” of women (Lerner, 2009; Merriam & Simpson, 2000). However, not all women recognized themselves in this herstory since the early researchers were operating under the traditional rules for research. Canning (1994) stated that the development of women’s history “prepared the way for the shift toward a self-conscious study of gender as a symbolic system or a signifier of relations of power” (p. 370). Chase (2005) argued that the use of a feminist lens has “opened up new understandings of historical, cultural, and social processes” (p. 655). In contrast, Scott(1999) stated that the ‘herstory’ approach to women’s history accepts that gender differences created different histories for women and men and does not question how “gender operates historically” (p. 22). An understanding of this ongoing discussion of the historical treatment of women informed this study at every stage from identifying subjects to data collection and data analysis. I wanted the data to give voice to the women in this study; I did not want to replace their voices with mine.

Feminist standpoint theory as a framework for historical research allows us to dig beneath the surface of society and begin to understand why and how women lived their lives as well as how interpretations of those lives were developed. Both Hartsock (1998) and Harding (2004) argued that feminists must develop a feminist standpoint that essentially replaces the class-based standpoint contained in Marxian theory. I would argue that no one feminist standpoint exists since women of different classes, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and so forth, experience society from very different

standpoints. Therefore, a specific standpoint must be understood and recognized in order to fully understand the life of a woman in any time period. Brooks (2007) stated that “. . . it is precisely within the distinctive characteristics of a particular standpoint, or in the uniqueness of a particular woman’s experience, that we can hope to find new knowledge (p, 72). For instance, the maid in a household experiences events from a different standpoint than her employer, even though both are women living in the same era and may be experiencing the same event. Neither experience is more valid than the other. In order to identify and understand a specific standpoint, all of those variables must be taken into consideration. A feminist standpoint provides a way to better understand marginalized groups such as women, and is located at the intersection of “ inequality, power, and politics” (Collins, 2012, p.443)

McCall (2005) argued that “gender as a single analytical category” (p. 1771) is limited and has been replaced by intersectionality which takes into account the intersections of race, class, gender, and so forth. Crenshaw (1991) further argued that identity politics ignores differences and fuses subjects into one homogeneous group. The application of a feminist standpoint lens aids in avoiding this trap that has distorted historical views of women. In other words, the subjects of this study are more than the label of “woman,” more than second class citizens, more than their class or race; and it is at the intersection of these constructs that we can achieve a better understanding of who they were.

### **Archival Research**

This study takes a feminist standpoint into the archive. Since the archives are central to this study, it is important to understand the part the archive plays in recording history.



Historical research provides “a telescopic view of significant events and also relates events to their broader context” (Danto, 2008, pp. 310-12). Garraghan (1948) stated that history is a combination of three concepts: past human events; the record of those events; and the process or method of making that record. In fact, the word ‘history’ originally meant ‘inquiry’ or ‘research’ rather than the current use which is that history is a record of events from the past. Trouillot (1995) added that “history means both the facts of the matter and a narrative of those facts, both ‘what happened’ and ‘that which is said to have happened’” (p. 2). He goes on to say that the narrative is constructed and told by those in power as we have seen in the historical neglect of the historical narrative of women’s lives and accomplishments. Buss (2001) cautioned that as we enter the archive we must recognize that archives are not “neutral” and neither are the researchers who collect data in the archives (p. 2). In fact, the collection itself is ever-changing in content, interpretation, and treatment; so it is neither static nor exact.

The process of recording history means that we can never know *exactly* what happened in the past because during the process of recording, decisions concerning inclusion and exclusion are inevitably made. The historical record left behind is merely an interpretation of the events filtered through the biases of the recorder based on whatever found its way into the archive from official records to the odds and ends of everyday life (Steedman, 2002). Cronon (2008) said “one of the most challenging things about doing historical research is that the past doesn’t exist anymore” (p. 3). The closest the researcher can come to tracking down what actually happened is through primary sources often found in the archives of libraries, governmental agencies, universities, historical organizations, personal collections, and so forth. Primary sources are generally

identified as containing first hand accounts documented as close to the event as possible. Even archival research is restricted by what someone thought was worth preserving.

Scott (1999) argued that history is a participant in creating knowledge and in the creation of our understanding of gender roles. Therefore, what is preserved and how it is treated in the archives determines our knowledge of the past and our view of what is and our understanding of why it is. In an attempt to address these issues, Busha and Harter (1980) developed three principles to consider when conducting historical research:

1. Consider the slant or biases of the information you are working with and the ones possessed by the historians themselves. This is particularly true of qualitative research. Quantitative facts may also be biased in the types of statistical data collected or in how that information was interpreted by the researcher.
2. There are many factors that can contribute to “historical episodes.”
3. Evidence should not be examined from a singular point of view (pp. 99-100).

The lives of women have less chance of being documented and saved than the lives of men (Lerner, 2009; Scott, 1999). Part of the reason is simply that women did not participate in many of the activities that resulted in public recordkeeping such as voting, business, or political activity. Further, written communications of women have traditionally been de-valued by society and therefore, were not routinely preserved. The search for records of the events of women’s lives often leads us far beyond society’s official archives to places where personal correspondence and other writings are preserved.

Burton (2003) argued that family narratives, as well as the home itself are also archives and should be researched in the same way as a library archival collection. This

is particularly true in researching the lives of women since they generally have multiple roles including those which support family life. Historical research is detective work and every clue is important including photographs, journals, objects, and so on.

Just as it is important to understand how archives affect the recording of history, it is also important to understand archival research. In an effort to understand the aims of women's archival research, Kahar (2001) described the "six operations" that take place in this kind of study:

1. The recovery of heretofore unknown materials, facts, knowledges;
2. The reclamation of women's lives;
3. The reclamation of women's ordinary, everyday (or "trivial") experiences as valuable, having their own integrity, both formal and substantive;
4. The reclamation of women's writing, in a variety of life-writing genres--- letters, diaries, memoirs, paintings, samplers, gravestones, cashiers, and other kinds of reminiscences;
5. The investigation, as a consequence of the above four operations, of how women's lives and works change how we think about reading, and
6. The ongoing project of rescuing women's lives and cultures from the "anonymity of history" (Davies, 2001 as quoted by Kadar), so that they are understood as part of our history and present (p. 116).

This list of operations helps to delineate both the process and goal of women-centered archival research while establishing that archives are ever-changing as new knowledge is formulated. Simply by engaging in this genre of research we are filling in the gaps left by archival practices which have not, historically valued women or their lives.

### **Digital Archives**

The age of computers and the Internet has brought us the new phenomenon of digital archives. Many libraries, historical associations, governmental agencies, and private collections are now being digitized and archived in websites that provide access to the general public. In fact, during the course of this study, more and more books, documents, and other artifacts have appeared online. The University of Texas defined a digital archive as “A documented information system employing information architecture configured to assure trustworthiness and long-term retention of digital assets” (Digital Archive, 2010). Bolick (2006) added that digital archives include “collections of numerical data, texts, images, maps, videos, and audio files that are available through the Internet” and are generally free (p. 122).

Digital archives are aimed at “democratizing” historical information by giving universal access to information housed around the world (Bolick, 2006). In addition, the vast storage capabilities of digital archives make room for the historical documents of marginalized populations thus providing access to a more inclusive historical account of society. Thomas (1999), in a speech at the opening of the Bush Library, pointed out that “the Civil War, for example, did not just happen to soldiers and generals, but to women and men, blacks and whites, poor and rich, children and adults” and the implementation of digital archives provides both access and space for those historical accounts.

Adding to the wealth of digitized documents provided by libraries and historical organizations are digitized collections of out of print books provided by archival websites and sources such as Google e-books. These books can be downloaded, usually at no cost.

This service allows access to books that may be difficult or impossible to locate any other way as are many of the books written by the subjects of this study. Digitizing allows archival material to be viewed and researched by a wide number of people without fear of damaging or destroying the original artifact. Further, it eliminates the need for travel to a distant location to view archived materials. Chapter 3 explains how archives and digitally archived material influenced this study.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Method**

#### **Research Design**

##### **Data Collection**

The first step in finding the answers to the research questions in this study was to understand the lives of the seventeen women who are the subjects of the study. This turned out to be a gargantuan task partly because they traveled across the country, and in some cases around the world, to continue their education and establish their professional and personal lives.

The second difficulty in learning about their lives was tracking down their papers, public records, and many other sources of tiny bits of information that added up to a somewhat biographical record of their lives. I expected to find most, if not all, the data in the archives of the colleges and universities they attended. This proved not to be true. The archival data can only be described as “uneven” in that some of the women’s papers, like Marion Talbot’s papers, were archived (although not catalogued thoroughly) while the information on others such as S. Alice Brown was scant. I was only able to find data on some women including Dean and Frisby by following their journeys and then searching local libraries, historical societies, institutional archives, and corresponding with the historians of organizations of which they were members.

Thirdly, some of the women were married and changed their names. I began with a list of birth names and little, if any, indication that some of them married; so researching under maiden names sometimes led to dead ends. Additionally, some of the women had very common names and it was difficult (sometimes impossible) to discern if the woman in the document was the correct one. If I could not document the information, I chose not to include it in the data.

The next difficulty was expected since one of the major reasons for this study is that the lives and accomplishments of these women have not been valued by historians in the same way that the lives of their male counterparts were valued and recorded. Therefore, much of the data has been lost or disposed of as valueless by family, friends, colleagues, and the women themselves. Often, the data that I did locate was not catalogued or listed in the various archives' finding guides so I remained unaware that a particular archive had information on one of the subjects. Sometimes I arrived at an archive to find that their collection consisted of one or two documents or simply copies of documents from other archives I had visited. In some cases, the archivists were familiar with material that was not listed and were interested enough in my study to direct me to that material. In other cases, the archivist became interested in the search and continued to send me crucial information that verified other data or led to another data source. Sometimes it took several inquiries before the archivist was willing to assist in the search.

An example of the assistance I received concerns the Milwaukee Branch of the AAUW. Dr. Almah Frisby lived most of her life in Milwaukee but I was unable to find evidence that she continued to be active in the ACA/AAUW after settling there. I contacted the current Branch president and was then assisted by several members,

particularly, Nancy Nohl, a retired librarian and the Milwaukee Branch historian. It was my luck that they had just finished a research of their branch history and published a book in June, 2012 so they were interested and well-versed in their history.

As a group, they became interested in Dr. Frisby and hoped to be able to claim her as one of their own although they had not noticed her name in their recent research of the records. However, they did their own research of local sources (I also shared the little information I had) and decided that she was an interesting and accomplished woman who would lend prestige to their branch.

Nohl began corresponding with me and was soon able to send proof that Dr. Frisby had been a member and leader of the organization. She moved boxes around in storage, dug out minutes from meetings more than a hundred years old, found Frisby's name, copied the records, and mailed them to me along with a copy of their book. They could officially claim Dr. Frisby and I could verify her activities in the Milwaukee branch. Recovering this information was a joyous development in the search for Almah Frisby not unlike scoring a pivotal point in a ball game.

We had barely stopped celebrating this discovery when I learned that Mary O. Marston Walmsley had also moved to Wisconsin and lived most of her life near Milwaukee. Another inquiry sent to Nancy Nohl resulted in another search. She found a newspaper article reporting that Marston Walmsley had sold her house and moved to Zion City to teach Greek. This bit of information resulted in a search for the "right" Zion City and Zion University. Thanks to Nohl's knowledge of regional history, I narrowed the search to a planned religious community in Illinois and contacted the historical society there. They reported that indeed she was a part of that community and there was



a college where she taught. Nohl sent me a detailed timeline of the Walmsley family including at least three generations. A more detailed version of Marston Walmsley's life is in her profile in chapter four.

This narrative is just one example of the complex search for data that took place for each of these women. Had I limited the research to the archives as I expected to do, I would have little if any data on Dean, Frisby, Brown, and several others. As is normal when employing constructivist grounded theory, the data actually helped to strategize the data collection and thereby inform and construct the method (Charmaz, 1995; Charmaz, 2006).

The final difficulty in gathering accurate data was that much of the information that still exists is either biographical accounts written by family, friends, or colleagues or biographies written later but generally based on information found in the earlier accounts. Many of these books and articles were little more than repetitions of earlier work. Often, the accounts differed and there is simply no surviving data to verify the accuracy of the information given. Fortunately, a couple of the women wrote about their lives themselves in the forms of journals or autobiographies.

An important part of data collection for this project was locating archives that held artifacts that were pertinent to the study. As Schultz (2008) pointed out "a writer is not likely to find all of the records he or she needs in a single collection, in a single location (p. viii). I began with an online search using each subject's name, and date and place of graduation from an institution of higher learning. That information came from the Talbot and Rosenberry book, *The History of the American Association of University*

*Women: 1881-1931* (1931) which was, as stated previously, the starting point for data collection.

The next step, after locating the archive, was to consult online finding aids when available. Along with researching the finding aids and listed holdings I reviewed each archive's website for instructions for gaining access to the material. Most archives requested contact before a visit and so I emailed or called the archive and provided the requested information including a list of the documents I wanted to review, the purpose of my research, and when I would be arriving. During this phase of the inquiry I gave each archivist a list of the seventeen women. Most of the archivists reviewed the holdings of that library and then reported whether or not they had material on each woman.

In some instances, such as the University of Wisconsin, during our conversation, the archivist informed me that all relevant material was digitized and readily available online. This eliminated the need for travel to those archives. In other instances, the number of documents pertaining to one or more of the subjects was minimal so the archivist agreed to provide copies of all documents either through email or postal mail which again eliminated the need for an onsite visit.

The first phase of archival research began with the eight institutions of higher education attended by these women. (See Table 2 below).

Table 2

*Location of Institutions and Collections*

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Description of Accessed Collections</b>
Boston University Boston, MA	Miner, Talbot	alumnae records, enrollment records
Cornell University Rare and Manuscripts Collection Ithaca, NY	Ladd	alumnae records, enrollment records
Oberlin College Archives Oberlin, OH	E. Hayes, Morgan, Stratton	necrology files, alumnae records
Smith College Archives Northampton, MA	Brown	alumnae records, Sophia Smith Collection, AAUW documents
University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library Ann Arbor, MI	Andrews, Freeman, Marston	alumnae records, class records, enrollment records necrology files
University of Wisconsin Archives and Record Management Madison, WI	Dean, Frisby	enrollment records, alumnae records
Vassar College Archives and Special Collections	Cushing, A. Hayes Richards	alumnae files
Wellesley College Archives Wellesley, MA	Blake, Metcalf	alumnae records, enrollment records,

After communicating with archivists at all of the above sites, I learned that data held by Boston University, the University of Wisconsin, and Cornell University could be obtained either by digitized copies available online or the archivists could send copies via email or postal mail since the number of holdings was small enough to accommodate copying. I visited the remaining five university archives to begin collecting data. The preliminary search for data revealed that several of the subjects also taught at universities and/or attended graduate school at other institutions. I searched for additional data at the archives of institutions listed below in Table 3.

The data found in the archives listed in Table 3 led to data located in other repositories which are listed in Table 4 below. For instance, I often found alumnae records that listed places of education or employment which led to another archive. The locations of these repositories are alphabetized by institution.

Table 3

*Institutions where Data were Collected and Methods of Collection*

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Description of Collections</b>	<b>Data Collection Methods</b>
Chapel Hill/Chauncy Waltham, MA	Ladd, Cushing	enrollment records	email corresp.
Kenyon College Greenslade Special Collections & Archive Gambier, OH	Andrews	Harcourt Seminary for Girls Collection	copies emailed
Massachusetts Institute of Technology Archives and Special Collections Cambridge, MA	Richards	Ellen Swallow Richards Collection	email/copies mailed
Montana State University Special Collections and Archives Bozeman, MT	Dean	General Files	copies emailed
University of Chicago Hyde Park, IL	Talbot	Marion Talbot papers,	visit/9 days
University of Colorado Archives Boulder, CO	Stratton	Directory of Offices U of C histories	copies emailed
University of Wisconsin Office of the Registrar Madison, WI	Dean, Frisby	enrollment records	email corresp.
Wellesley College Archives Wellesley, MA	Freeman, E. Hayes Morgan, Stratton	faculty records	visit/3 days

*Note.* Corresp. = correspondence

Table 4

*Secondary Data Locations and Description of Data and Collection Methods*

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Collections</b>	<b>Collection Methods</b>
AAUW Milwaukee Branch Milwaukee, WI	Frisby Marston	Organization records, local archives	email corresp. copies mailed
AAUW Archives Washington, DC	Brown	Organization records/archives	email corresp. website
Boston University Boston, MA	Dean, Frisby	enrollment/grad. records	email corresp.
Boston University Medical Alumnae Library Boston, MA	Dean, Frisby	alumnae records	email corresp.
Granville Historical Society Granville, OH	E. Hayes	Ellen Hayes Collection	phone/email/1 day visit
MIT Museum Cambridge, MA	Richards	Biographical files	email corresp.
Montana Historical Helena, MT	Dean	Dr. Maria M. Dean Papers	email/copies mailed
Montana State AAUW Office Bozeman, MT	Dean	Organization records	email corresp. with State Historian
Zion Hist. Society Zion, IL	Marston	archived records of New Zion, IL	email corresp.

In addition to the many data collection sites listed in the charts above, personal correspondence with archivists and historians is defined in this study as another data collection site. Some of the exchanges offered rich and thick data that came about during our personal discussions of the subjects of this study. In fact, the conversations in these emails became part of the data. For instance, in an ongoing email conversation with University of Colorado archivist, David M. Hayes, concerning Stratton's position of Dean of Women at that institution I received the following communication:

Having done some research on this topic, I have attached an overview that includes a discussion of gender issues over time at the University. I have worked in the archives for some decades, and have studied undergraduate and graduate US history. I have developed some context regarding women's status in Colorado and at CU that might be relevant. One aspect of women at CU from 1880-1920 would have been their tendency NOT to be circumscribed too closely by contemporary feminine roles. CU women at that time lived off campus in boarding houses, competed in sports, enrolled in the engineering school, the medical school, and the graduate school.

Is it possible, with such a rudimentary structure, that women at the university at that time were seen by administrators and faculty as being under "insufficient control or protection? Could it be that Dean Stratton was brought in to set up and provide such control? (personal correspondence, October 30, 2012).

Our conversation supported other data that suggested that Stratton was not particularly welcomed by the women at the University of Colorado. Just as important, Mr. Hayes painted a detailed picture of what Stratton's life was like during her time in Colorado

which was information I would not have found in any other way than through his interested correspondence.

Many of the archival searches, email correspondence, and conversations with archivists and historians led me to secondary sources such as historical accounts of the institutions or books focused on local events which provided data to either fill in the gaps of sparse archival data or to verify data found in primary sources. Occasionally, secondary sources mentioned a new source of data that led me to contact yet another archive. For instance, Milwaukee historian Nancy Nohl's local research revealed that Marston Walmsley moved to the utopian community of New Zion, Illinois to teach at the New Zion College. Previously, I thought that Marston Walmsley settled down in Milwaukee to raise her children, based on correspondence found in her alumnae file at the University of Michigan. In this way, historians and archivists helped me gather the scattered and sometimes seemingly lost, data piece by piece, clue by clue and our correspondence became a repository of previously inaccessible data; and gradually the data began to take on form and themes developed as I moved from one archive to another.

### **Data Analysis**

I employed a feminist standpoint theoretical framework (Harding, 2004; Hartsock, 2004) to further understand the limitations and opportunities the subjects faced as women in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The data were analyzed through the standpoint theory lens as well as liberal, socialist, traditional Marxist and radical-feminist frameworks (Jagger, 1983). "Feminist research goals foster empowerment and emancipation for women and other marginalized groups, and feminist researchers often



apply their findings in the service of promoting social change and social justice for women” (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 4). The interaction of my standpoint as researcher and how I conducted the research with the standpoints of the subjects is an important facet of feminist research (Charmaz, 2006; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007).

In addition, I utilized constructivist grounded theory with a constant comparison analysis process throughout the study particularly aimed at creating or developing a theory (Charmaz, 1995; Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) about the professional and educational lives of the subjects of this study. The goal of grounded theory research is to “move beyond description and to generate or discover a theory” (Creswell, 2007, pp. 62-63). Rather than begin the study with a theory, the theory is generated from the data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

This method allows the researcher to focus and modify additional rounds of data collection around the themes that emerge from a first round of data collection thus recognizing the iterative nature of constructing a theory grounded in the data and eliminating the potential of acquiring large amounts of data that are not immediately applicable to the study (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 1995). It was important during data collection to focus on emerging themes and avoid following other interesting, but not particularly relevant strands of interpretation. This created a constantly focused view of the available data as the themes began to appear. Theories and categories originated in the data rather than the wholly preconceived ideas of the researcher (Charmaz, 1995; Morse, 2009).

Charmaz, (1995) noted that “Certainly any observer’s worldview, disciplinary assumptions, theoretical proclivities, and research interests will influence his or her

observations and emerging categories” (p. 32). In my case, I brought a lifelong interest in issues related to educational access for women as well as a devotion to equality in all aspects of society for women and other groups who have been historically denied a place at the table. Those interests led me to notice and interpret aspects of the data that focused on those issues. For instance, some of the women were married and had children but I spent little time researching that part of their lives. On the other hand, I researched and recorded extensively in the areas of activism for women’s educational access.

Charmaz (1995) pointed out that those factors are only the “*points of departure* to look at data, to listen to interviewees, and to think analytically about the data” (p. 32) rather than limitations on emerging themes found in the data. I tried to suspend, or at least be aware of my personal standpoint and life experience when analyzing the data, particularly when the actions of one of the subjects was nearly incomprehensible to me as a modern feminist. In such a case, I looked for what might be called a “community of experience” or experiences we might have in common with each other which allowed me to more fully and accurately interpret their actions by comparing them with my actions in a similar situation.

While early proponents of grounded theory such as Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested that it is the researcher’s responsibility to separate herself from the data, Charmaz (1995) who advocated for a constructivist approach to grounded theory (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Creswell, 2007), stressed that the emerging themes in the data are the result of the interaction between the researcher and the data. Charmaz and Mitchell (1996) argued that

When fieldwork is committed and consequential, the writer’s voice both

shows and tells. It describes the action found and the experiences in finding it. Voice varies along these main dimensions: (a) the freshness of the inquiry, (b) the relationships researchers craft with their informants, and (c) the place of the studied phenomenon in larger systems of meaning and practice. (p. 297)

However, it is important to be clear that the researcher's voice is not the phenomena; instead, it is a report or clarification of the researcher's relationship or involvement with the phenomena, data, and the interpretation of the findings (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1996).

This means it is important that the researcher collects "rich" and "thick" data (Charmaz, 2006) that includes written field notes and descriptions of the collection process including the context in which the data were gathered. For instance, in archival research it is necessary to consider and record both what has been preserved and where and how the information has been archived. The location of the subjects' papers raises the questions of why that location was chosen and who chose the location, as well as what restrictions (if any) have been placed on access. These contextual details will have an affect on what data is gathered and how that data will be interpreted and according to Charmaz (2006) are part of the data.

The constructivist approach to grounded theory best fits this study insomuch as this approach depends on the researcher's interpretation of the data. Charmaz's (2006) interpretation of grounded theory methods, while built on a foundation of grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), differs from their interpretation in that she insisted that theory is not "discovered" but is constructed from "our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices" (p. 10).

Therefore, theory is an interpretation of the data rather than the one and only definitive reality. This approach appealed to me because my only resource was whatever material was left behind and preserved. It was clear to me that as the researcher, my interpretation of the data, as well as the data choices I made could only result in theory that was constructed by a combination of data and whatever I brought to the study.

Grounded theory analysis utilizes “detailed analytic procedures” (Creswell, 2007, p. 160) which include three levels or phases of coding. The coding phases are open, axial, and selective. Open coding aids the researcher in developing categories; axial coding makes connections between the categories; and selective coding then aids in building a narrative which connects the data and creates a theory (Creswell, 2007).

This method allowed me to identify important themes as they emerged which I divided into categories using what Charmaz (1995) defined as “line-by-line coding” (p. 37) which requires the researcher to focus on the data. Line-by-line coding leads to “focused coding” (Charmaz, 1995, 2006) which focuses on some of the identified themes and groups them into categories that shape the study.

I began coding by creating a list of documents, their locations, and the subject of the document. I chose to code the documents by the subjects’ names. In addition, I copied the documents as allowed by each particular archive. Most archives allowed me to make or request some amount of copies. However, the number allowed limited my ability to collect copies of all original data and made it necessary to rely on notes. I created folders for each of the seventeen subjects and filed notes and copies of documents in the appropriate folder. In addition, I created digital files for each subject and deposited email correspondence, pdf copies of documents, and so forth into the appropriate folder.

During this process, I began to notice themes that were appearing in more than one set of documents. I began keeping a list of those themes with notations of other similar themes. At this point, I was able to focus my search for data on the listed themes. The search became more and more focused on the themes that appeared to be widespread. I moved from a general reading of the data to a focused search for data that supported the more prominent themes. For example, I noticed right from the beginning that Marion Talbot's family played an important part in preparing her for higher education. As I reviewed the collection of her papers at the University of Chicago, I found that her family continued to support her educational and professional journey. Therefore, family support played an important role in Talbot's life. I looked for similar evidence that family support was important to the other subjects of this study and found that family support was a recurring theme.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), "The constant comparative method is a research design for multi-data sources, which is like analytic induction in that the formal analysis begins early in the study and is nearly completed by the end of data collection" (p. 73). Glaser (1965) argued that "the constant comparative method is designed to aid analysts with these abilities in generating a theory which is integrated, consistent, plausible, close to data," (p. 448). Glaser (1965) outlined four steps in constant comparison analysis:

- Comparing incidents applicable to each category.
- Integrating categories and their properties.
- Delimiting the theory.
- Writing the theory. (p. 439)

Charmaz (1995, 2006) advocated the use of memo-writing as a way to synthesize Glaser's steps of analysis by refining the categories and interpretations throughout both the data-gathering and analysis phases of the project.

Memo-writing provides a space for comparing data, developing codes, and identifying the need for further research in some areas (Charmaz, 2006). Before, during and after each session in an archive, I wrote memo or journal entries in a notebook. These entries described the facility, the archived material, my feelings as I read the material (for example: excitement at uncovering a piece of data that closed a gap in my knowledge), emerging themes that might or might not prove to be useful, sources to locate at a later time, names that appeared in letters or other documents that were new to me and needed further research, possible locations of data that came to light in the collections, my own issues, reservations, questions, and so forth. As Davies (2006) pointed out, in many newer research methods the researcher is "no longer invisible in the work of research" (p. 2). My presence was woven into all phases of this study and memo writing helped to clarify and evaluate my participation and contributions to the resulting data and treatment of that data.

Journal writing helped me to identify a phenomenon that I described as "caring" or "feeling protective" toward the subjects. Alpern, Antler, Perry, and Scobie (1992) described this phenomenon in their work in women's biographies as a "highly personal" relationship between the research and the subject, even when the subject is dead (p. 10). Below is an example from my journal written on July 21, 2011:

Reading Talbot's papers creates a roller coaster of emotions – I am moved by her letters to her parents; excited by her courageous decision to go "out west" to

Chicago; proud of her ability to create change in the man's world of the university; sad when I think of her alone in her rooms while her male colleagues fall in love, marry, and raise families.

It is all too easy to let these emotions lead me down interesting but disconnected paths like her struggle to decide if sororities should be allowed on campus or her involvement with the Women's Land Army. There are so many interesting paths to follow but I must stick with the path I have chosen. I promise myself that I will come this way again and explore these pathways and waysides in Talbot's life.

I am finding that archival research constantly requires these decisions – what to keep and what do I leave behind? Each decision changes the outcome of the study. Charmaz is correct in her insistence that what the researcher does is part of the story. It would be misleading to present the study without clearly stating that by making those decisions I am shaping the data in an important way.

This connection with Talbot made some of those decisions more complex. For instance, I found numerous comments about the close relationship between Talbot and her friend and assistant, Sophonisba Breckinridge. I also read a letter from Talbot to the Board of Trustees of the University of Chicago concerning some stocks she was leaving to the university that also stated that everything she had would first go to Breckinridge and then the university when Breckinridge died (Talbot, M. Papers, 1854-1948, Talbot to Board of Trustees, June 12, 1924, box 2, folder 9). As I journaled, I realized that I was arguing with myself about whether or not to include these data, mainly because I did not want to “harm” or distort Talbot's image by suggesting a possible romantic relationship with

Breckinridge. I wondered if it was a betrayal of the subject to talk about something she appeared to keep private. Alpern, Antler, Perry, and Scobie (1992) stated that “the very act of appropriating another’s life infringes on the subject’s privacy, perhaps even violating her identity” (p. 11). I realized that I had become fond of Talbot in a way that is similar to Ranney’s (2010) “love” (p. 125) for her subject in an archival study of a woman who reminded her of her grandmother. Additionally, Talbot’s papers included what seems like every piece of correspondence she handled from letters to the coal delivery man to rough drafts of letters and presentations. And yet, I found no correspondence between Talbot and Breckinridge. It appeared that Talbot did not want to share that part of her life with others, so I wondered if I had the ethical right to share it. Facing a similar situation in her research, Ranney (2010) wrestled with what she called “care” or ethical responsibility to the subject. She looked to feminist ethics for answers and found that her real question was whether she had the right to construct a subject’s story from the bits and pieces of archival data that were available. As Gold (2008) pointed out, archival research is

like putting together a jigsaw puzzle, except that you don’t have a picture on the box for reference, there’s more than one puzzle in the box, the picture keeps changing depending on how you fit the pieces together, and the pieces themselves change shape when your back is turned. (p. 14)

Through journaling I reasoned that Talbot hoped to have her life examined and her story told. The evidence for that conclusion is the fact that she carefully kept her papers and then gave them to the University of Chicago for safekeeping in the archive. Further, I decided that my bias of caring for Talbot (or at least the version of Talbot



revealed in the data), probably due to our shared values and passion for higher education, is still a bias and must be considered when making decisions concerning the data. And finally, those decisions should pass the test of whether or not the information is useful in creating new knowledge in the particular areas of education and profession that were the focus of this study.

The story of Talbot's life is made more accurate by the stories of the other subjects (and vice versa) which, in total, create a "collective biography" (Davies, 2006) of the founders of the AAUW and of the professional and educational lives of women in higher education during their era. By carefully reviewing the data I was trying to discover and recreate "the moment as it was lived" (Davies, 2006, p. 3) for a specific *group* of women. While the individual stories of the founders of the AAUW can be constructed they are subject to the variability in the available archival data. Some of these women's lives were better documented than others. Therefore, the focal point for the overall data analysis must remain on this specific group.

Collective biography is similar and yet different from the method of prosopography which Stone (1971) described as "the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors by means of a collective study of their lives" (as quoted by Clubb & Allen, 1977, p. 518). Clark (2003) stated that collective biography is a broad interpretation of prosopography which is actually a statistical study of a large group of subjects such as soldiers in the Civil War or elementary teachers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The major difference is that the collective biography studies a small group of people using their own words and insights while the prosopography studies a large group using statistical analysis.

Prosopography is, in some ways, at odds with grounded theory in that it requires a preset and focused list of data to be collected. In fact, this method strays over into quantitative research by trying to quantify the characteristics of each subject and then creating a list of those characteristics that can then be applied to the broader group. It does not address the “how” and “why” that are the focus of other qualitative methods, particularly, in this case, collective biography.

While a prosopographic study might be a useful next step when I would go back to the data to try to fill in any gaps left by the original research, it seems to me that the constructivist grounded theory approach was a necessary first step in the process of further understanding the lives of this group.

This study, then, is informed by the work of Bronwyn Davies and her colleagues with the concept of collective biography. Davies (2006) defined collective biography as “an ethical reflexive research practice” (p. x) which

Through a very intense, focused gaze on the particularity of our own memories, we hope to arrive at an understanding of the social, of the way individual subjectivities are created and maintained through specific kinds of discursive practices, within particular historical moments in particular contexts that in turn afford particular interactions and patterns of meaning. (p. 7)

She further explained that recounting the stories “produces a web of experiences that are at once individual, interconnected, collective – and political” (p. 18). This applies directly to the aim, method, and results of this study.

Davies, Flemmen, Gannon, Laws, and Watson (2002) stated that the subjects in a collective biography not only establish the parameters of the life story that emerges but

write the biography collaboratively. When applying these concepts to this archival study, I would argue that the subjects both established parameters and assisted in the writing of their collective biography by the choices of the material they left behind both private correspondence and public writings such as books and speeches. I, in league with the authors of secondary sources, and most importantly, the subjects themselves through written artifacts, have created what might be called a collective biography much like those of Davies and her colleagues. Throughout this research study I felt an awareness of a connection with the subjects; as though we were working in tandem to retrieve and voice the story of their remarkable lives. This process seems to me to be another application of collective biography. As Davies (2006) stated “The stories no longer primarily signify individual’s identities, but in their similarities and differences we become visible as constituted and constitutive beings” (p. 14). The voice of the researcher in the study is essentially a plural voice incorporating the voices of the subjects as found in the data.

This process requires constant journaling or memo writing on the part of the researcher who is essentially recording her part of the creation of the story or study. Thus, the memos become part of the data. From these memos a list of themes emerged. I created a formal list of themes which I carried with me to each collection site. The original list included: networking; correspondence between women; passion for education and teaching; working within the system; wide social network; courage; travel; families; and legitimizing decisions. This list was in constant flux as the data contributed new themes or revealed a theme as a dead end which did not apply to the group as a whole.

Considering that it is impossible to know beforehand what information is hidden in the various archives, this method of collecting and analyzing data fits best with historical research. Bryant and Charmaz (2007) argued that “ The iterative process of moving back and forth between empirical data and emerging analysis makes the collected data progressively more focused and the analysis successively more theoretical” (p. 1). For instance, early on I reviewed the Marion Talbot collection and noted that Talbot and Freeman Palmer consulted about possible candidates for faculty and administrative positions in various institutions. This led me to look for similar exchanges between the subjects in other collections. I began to develop a theory about the organization of a network between the subjects that utilized a strategy for wider access to these positions for their students and for themselves. As that theory developed by amassing more data focused on networking, I began to see the importance of and possible uses of similar networking for women in our profession today. In addition, I began to focus on the strategies employed in networking and formulated a possible strategy for creating and utilizing such a network.

This focused approach is particularly important with archival research inasmuch as the archived data may consist of a wide variety of information in many different forms which can lead the researcher down many unrelated and time consuming paths. Grounded theory allows the researcher to “direct, manage, and streamline” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2) data collection.

Both constructivist grounded theory methods and feminist standpoint theory require the researcher to “decenter” her own assumptions and focus on the role of the subject at hand (Star, 2007). By approaching this study with the feminist standpoint

theory lens firmly in place, and with the use of constructivist grounded theory approaches my aim was to create a new understanding of the professional lives of the founders of the AAUW rather than to simply validate existing historical theories (where such theories exist) or “theory generated by logical deduction from *a priori* assumptions” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 3). As data analysis progressed, I came to realize that through a combination of assuming a feminist standpoint lens, and using the constructivist grounded theory approach to collection and analysis, a collective biography of these seventeen women was being created.

### **Time Line**

The archival data collection for this study was conducted during the summers of 2011 and 2012 with visits to the various library archives (see page 41, Table 3). In addition, online acquisition of archival documents and other materials, as well as email communications with various archivists were conducted during both 2011 and 2012. The data analysis and follow-up research was completed in fall, 2012. Writing, revision, and editing was completed in spring, 2013.

### **Summary**

This combination of theories and methods informed the arrangement of the findings in chapter four of this dissertation. Through constant comparison analysis and the use of successive coding the data was organized into themes and formed into theory using a narrative format which identified the answers to the targeted research questions.

## Chapter Four

### Findings

*January 6---Did not go to meeting, tired. January 11---Tired, indifferent.  
January 20---Tired. January 27---Tired. February 1---Busy, tired.  
February 2---Almost sick. February 9---Miserable, lay on sofa all day.  
February 13---Felt wretchedly all day. February 14---Lay down, sick.  
February 19---Oh! So tired. February 23---So tired. March 20---Tired.  
March 24---Tired. April 11---Terribly tired. (Hunt, 1912, p. 34).*

Ellen Henrietta Swallow Richards' biographer and colleague, Caroline Hunt, offered the above excerpts of Richards' diary from 1868 as proof of the depression caused by her inability to pursue her intellectual interests by attending college. Richards was the first female student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), a renowned educator and scientist, as well as one of the founders of the AAUW. Hunt described Richards' deep need for further education in the following passage:

Thus hampered and delayed in getting the education she desired, and with a feeling of power within her for which there was no outlet, she entered in 1866 upon the only unhappy period of her life.

But the tasks which were given her at this time were not commensurate with her power, and the unused energy within her seems fairly to have turned upon her and to have reduced her almost to a condition of invalidism. (pp. 32-34)

Perhaps Richards' own words explain her feelings even more clearly as she wrote to a friend about her difficulty in acquiring an education.

I lived for over two years in Purgatory really, and I didn't know what to do, and it seemed best for me to just stay and endure and it seemed as though I should just go wild. I used to fret and fume---inside---so every day, and think I couldn't live so much longer. I was thwarted and hedged in on every side; it seemed as though God didn't help me a bit and man was doing his best against me and my own heart even turned traitor, and, well---altogether I had a sorry time of it. (Hunt, 1912, p. 34)

As Hunt (1912) reported, there were no colleges in New England at that time that were willing to admit women; in part, this was due to the gender separation convention of Victorian society (Gordon, 1990). However, the newly founded Vassar College in New York was just beginning to gain recognition as the first women's college on the East coast (Solomon, 1985) and less than six months later, Richards wrote from her Vassar dormitory room "September 17---First day at college; am delighted even beyond anticipations, the rest seems so refreshing" (Hunt, 1912, p. 35).

After receiving their college degrees, many of these pioneering women faced a world which offered no place for educated women (Solomon, 1985). Marion Talbot, like many of her colleagues, found herself at loose ends. Although women were beginning to earn college degrees, there was little a woman of her socioeconomic class could do with

that degree. She found that she was no longer content to live in her parents' home and pursue the social and homemaking pastimes expected of her (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931).

When women who were fortunate and privileged enough to attend a university or college graduated, society provided few opportunities to implement their education. Most women were expected to marry and have children rather than build a career (Gordon, 1990). The problem was that these women were now educated. That means they saw the world differently and had a broader sense of the possibilities and responsibilities that accompany higher education (McGerr, 2003).

The most obvious common denominator among these women is that they gained access to higher education. While access was and is crucial, it is equally important to understand what happened both before and after gaining access to education for these women. Scott (1999) argued:

How are those that cross the thresholds received? If they belong to a group different from the one "inside," what are the terms of their incorporation? How do the new arrivals understand their relationship to the place they have entered? What are the terms of the identity they establish? The experience of the bearers of these marks of difference poses a challenge to physical models of access, for it belies the conclusion that all that matters is getting in the door. (178-179)

The stories of how each woman gained access to higher education and where it led her answer the questions posed by Scott and at the same time help us to understand the history of women in higher education, how these particular pioneers established space and defined roles for women, and what their lives were like both before and after access.



This chapter begins with short biographical profiles of each of the seventeen women who formed the committee to establish an organization for women in higher education. The accessible data from each woman varied widely and at times I had to rely on secondary sources such as memorials and autobiographies when primary data no longer exists. Nevertheless, the combination of primary and secondary data created new knowledge about the women, themselves, and the role women played in higher education in the progressive era of American history. I have pieced together from this decidedly uneven collection of data a biographical profile of each subject which will answer the first research question:

**RQ1: How will archival data reveal a more comprehensive narrative of the educational and professional lives of the founders of the AAUW?**

Some, like Talbot and Richards, were well documented but others were not, and I could learn little more than a few biographical facts and dates. Still others had a biographical account of their lives, often in memoriam, but I could not locate the primary data the biographers used. I decided that these biographies written by family, friends, and colleagues should be considered primary data since the authors were present for much of the lives of the subjects. Regarding photographs of these women: it was important for me, as a researcher, to be able to picture each woman and I think it is helpful for the readers of this study. However, I was unable to locate photographs for some of the women. Rather than make note of each individual case where the picture is missing, this comment will serve as explanation for the lack of uniformity in the biographical profiles.

In the end, the lesson is clear. I feel an even stronger sense of urgency concerning the lack of a historical record of the lives of American women. The list of accomplishments and “firsts” in just the lives of these seventeen women is astounding and should be public knowledge and included in the history books of our nation’s schools. The following profiles of the subjects of this study begin to tell the story of their pathways to those accomplishments and resulting access to higher education for women.

**Biographical Profiles**



**Dr. Maria M. Dean**

**Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin Archives**

Maria Morrison Dean was born in 1858 in Madison, Wisconsin and graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1880 with a B. L. degree (The University of Wisconsin alumni directory, 1849-1919, p. 80). A B. L. degree is a “Bachelors of Letters” and Dean’s major was “Modern Classical” (personal communication with Registrar’s Office, University of Wisconsin, 2/14/2013). Dean’s mother worked at the university as a sorority housemother and her uncle, Dr. John Sterling, was one of the founders of the university and served as president (Shirley, 1995; Vucanovich, n.d.). She received a S. B. degree from the Boston University School of Medicine in 1883.

The S. B. degree is the same as the modern day “B. S.” degree but was abbreviated from the Latin phrase “scienitae baccalaurus” (A. Ettien, Head of Technical Services, Boston University Alumnae Medical Library, personal communication, February 14, 2013). Her thesis title was “General and Local Treatment” (A. Ettien, Head of Technical Services, Boston University Alumnae Medical Library, personal communication, August 27, 2012). After graduation from medical school, Dr. Dean pursued further study in Germany and when she returned she moved to Helena, Montana where she joined her sister’s family (Shirley, 1995).

It can be extrapolated from the time frame of her years in Boston that her connection to the ACA came about through her contact with the Talbots. Dr. Talbot, Marion’s father was the head of the university’s medical school. In addition, a letter from Emma C. Bascom to Emily Talbot (Talbot’s mother) dated May 9, 1881 found in the Marion Talbot Papers (1854-1948) mentions that two Wisconsin graduates, Dean and Frisby were students in the Boston University Medical School. During her time in

Boston Dean was active in the formation of the ACA. In fact, she served on the committee appointed to organize the first general meeting at the Chauncy Hall School on January 14, 1882 (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931, p. 11).

Dr. Dean served as a sectional vice president for the North Rocky Mountain Section, a regional arm of the ACA which consisted of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. The Montana State Branch had 27 members and two chapters located in Missoula and Helena (The Journal of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, 1916-17, p. 43). She continued to be active in the Helena branch where she served as president (The Journal of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, 1915, p. 8; The Journal of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, 1916-17, p. 69). Under her leadership the Helena chapter in collaboration with the Missoula chapter worked to establish better care of institutionalized epileptics. In addition, Helena members worked on two specific lines of study. The topics of their work were the “general study of genetics, heredity, and variation, with particular attention to the studies being carried on at Vineland (New Jersey school for the mentally challenged) and to Mendelism (a system of heredity formulated by Mendel, 1822-1884); and early history of Montana and Helena” (The Journal of Collegiate Alumnae, p. 44).

As previously stated, after returning to the United States Dr. Dean moved to Helena, Montana where her sister’s family had recently relocated. Montana had just become a state and Helena was beginning to move from wild frontier mining camp to a fully developed city (Walter, 1998). She was given a license to practice medicine in Montana in 1889 and was the 27<sup>th</sup> doctor and the first woman to become licensed in that state (Forssen, 1978; “Helena Women,” 1978). Emily F. Vucanovich (1988), who wrote

an unpublished biography of the Dean sisters, said that Dr. Dean drove “a spirited team of horses” (p. 2) when she made house calls in Helena and the surrounding area.

Dr. Dean’s large and successful practice was focused on the needs of women, children, and the mentally ill. This area of medicine was often neglected by her male counterparts and a female doctor was greatly appreciated in the growing town of Helena (Shirley, 1995). She was a driving force in the establishment of St. Peter’s Hospital and one of the first doctors who practiced medicine at that institution which opened in 1887 (Phillips, 1962; Shirley, 1995) She became an expert in treating diphtheria and typhoid fever in children and developed a quarantine system for the area (Forssen, 1978; Phillips, 1962; Vucanovich, 1988). Dr. Dean was a leader in both civic and educational causes in Helena. In 1885 she served as chairman of the Helena Board of Health (Phillips, 1962; Vucanovich, 1988). During her time on the Board of Health she focused her attention on the needs of the “feeble minded” (Helena Independent, 1915).

She was particularly interested in the problems of working women and served as chairman of the Helena Board of Education while spearheading the founding of the Helena YWCA in 1914 (Forssen, 1978; Helena Independent, 1915; Phillips, 1962). It is not surprising that Dean was interested in establishing a branch of the YWCA since at that time the YWCA was an active force in the education and welfare of working women. The YWCA’s Industrial Department was a powerful organization within the organization with over 60,000 members including minority women. Just before World War I, pressure from the Industrial Department caused the YWCA to shift its focus from “providing minimal social services for poor women to scrutinizing the social consequences of

industrial capitalism and demanding far-reaching economic and social reforms” (Frederickson, 1984, p. 77).

Dean and her colleagues were in the thick of fighting for women’s rights and much of the Montana movement for women’s suffrage was centered in Helena and the surrounding area (Larson, 1973). Dr. Dean’s time and attention moved to the suffragist movement in Montana where she was a prominent member of the Montana Equal Suffrage Association and the National American Women’s Suffrage Association. She is given much of the credit for the successful 1914 campaign for women’s right to vote in Montana. In fact, she was one of Jeanette Rankin’s advisors in her campaign to become the first woman elected to the Congress (Forssen, 1978). According to Forssen, she was asked to run for Congress but declined and supported Rankin instead. She served on the finance committee of Rankin’s campaign (Larson, 1973). Dean was visiting Washington, DC in 1919 when she became seriously ill. President Woodrow Wilson offered his presidential railroad car so she could get back to Montana where she died of cancer at the age of sixty-two (Walter, 1996). In 1998, the Maria M. Dean Medical Building was added to St. Peter’s Hospital in honor of Dr. Dean’s work as one of the founders of the hospital as well as one of the first doctors to practice in that facility.



The Wisconsin Alumni Magazine (March, 1902) vol. 3(6).



The second member of the ACA founding committee from the University of Wisconsin was Almah Jane Frisby. She was born in 1857 in West Bend, Wisconsin. Her father, Leander F. Frisby was a lawyer and at one time served as Attorney-General of the State of Wisconsin (Willard & Livermore, 1893). She was educated in the West Bend public schools and then attended the Wheelock School for Girls located in Milwaukee (Thwaites, 1900). Frisby graduated from Wisconsin in 1878 with a B.S. degree in General Science. Like Dean, Frisby attended the Boston University School of Medicine where she received an M. D. in 1883. She returned to Wisconsin and established a medical practice in Milwaukee (Willard & Livermore, 1893).

Frisby actively practiced medicine from 1883 through 1907 and was classified as a homeopathic physician (Frank, 1915). Homeopathy is the practice of what might be called “natural medicine” and was very popular in Boston during that time. Women were particularly interested in homeopathic practices that included clothing reform, exercise, and temperance (Rosenberg, 1982). Marion Talbot’s father, who was Dean of the Boston University Medical School during Frisby’s time there as a student, was also a homeopathic practitioner which may have influenced Frisby’s choice of practice. During that time she served as resident in charge of the Women’s Homeopathic Hospital in Philadelphia from 1886-1887 and spent the summer of 1887 as the homeopathic resident of the Hotel Kaaterskil in the Catskill Mountains. She then returned to Milwaukee and resumed her medical practice (Willard & Livermore, 1893).

In 1888, Dr. Frisby was appointed Preceptress of Ladies Hall by University of Wisconsin President Thomas C. Chamberlin, 1843-1928. She also served as Professor of Hygiene and Sanitary Science. Chamberlin justified her appointments by explaining that

“Miss Frisby’s thorough scientific and professional training fit her to watch over the health of the young ladies” (Teicher & Jenkins, 1987, p. 10).

In 1901, a Wisconsin bill was passed stating that “at least one member of the Board of Regents of the University shall be a woman” and therefore, Governor La Follette appointed Frisby as the first woman regent (The Wisconsin alumni, July, 1901, p. 452). She served as regent from 1901 – 1906. Frisby took advantage of her position as Regent to press for a department of domestic science and economy which was established and funded in 1903 (Progress of the University, January, 1903).

During her time as regent she was also appointed by the governor as the first woman State Controller. She served in that position from 1905 – 1912 and was the principal overseer of the state mental asylums. In fact, the train stop at the Marshfield asylum was named “Frisby” due to her frequent visits to that facility (The Soo, Fall, 2009). She served as a special agent of the governor conducting investigations of those institutions and reported directly to the governor (Loeb, October, 1905).

There is record of Frisby’s continued membership and activity in the ACA on both national and local levels. The 1886 ACA Register lists her as a Director and lists her home address as Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Additionally, The *Calendar Milwaukee Branch of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae*, (1898-1899) lists her as an active member although, according to current Milwaukee Branch historian, Nancy Nohl, Frisby’s name did not appear in the 1897-1898 *Calendar* (personal communication, October 12, 2012).

According to the Branch minutes for October 14, 1899, she served as a member of the program committee which was charged with securing a location for future meetings

for the 1899-1890 year. The minutes for October 20, 1900 state that Frisby served on the Committee on Philanthropy. Further evidence of her membership in the Milwaukee Branch could not be verified due to water-damaged records (N. Nohl, personal communication, October, 2012). After retirement, Frisby moved to Santa Barbara, California where she died on November 12, 1931, (Milwaukee Journal, November 18, 1931).



Anne E. F. Morgan

Courtesy of the Wellesley College Archives

Anne Eugenia Felicia Morgan was born on October 3, 1845 to Oberlin College professor Reverend John Morgan and Elizabeth Mary Leonard Morgan. She graduated from Oberlin in 1865 with an A. B. degree and in 1869 received an A. M. degree from that institution. She taught at Oberlin for at least one year and then went to Vassar College to teach Greek (Oberlin College Alumnae form, 1905; Wellesley College, In Memoriam, 1875-1925).

From Vassar Morgan was called to Wellesley College by Charles Durant where she served as Professor of Philosophy from 1878-1893. She taught the “first seniors---the class of ’79---the required work in mental and moral philosophy” (Hurl, 1882, p. 1). She was in charge of both Philosophy and English Composition and her “bent of mind was distinctly theological and metaphysical; she was a deep thinker and keen logician” (Hurl, 1882, p. 1).

Estelle Hurl, Wellesley College class of 1882, Instructor of Ethics at Wellesley from 1884-1891 and Morgan’s assistant from 1878 to 1886 (Estelle Hurl Faculty Records) describes Professor Morgan as follows:

It was less through her didactic teaching than through personal fellowship that she did her greatest work. She gave herself freely; she knew how to love. The girls of her corridor, her table, her reading clubs, and the individual students who sought her friendship, found her by turns, a playfellow, a motherly adviser and a spiritual confessor. Her creed was an easy one: “Nothing less than the best is good enough.” (p. 3)

While teaching philosophy, in 1889, Professor Morgan published a small book titled *Philosophical Studies in Literature: The White Lady* in which she claimed that the

“universal ideal of life is discovered by philosophy” (p. 5) in history, literature, and in nature.

After leaving Wellesley in 1900 (Hurl, n.d.), Morgan traveled and taught in Europe for three years. Her activities and purpose during those years is unclear. According to one Alumnae form which seems to be in her writing, she lived in France and Italy from 1893-1894. Another report says she lived in Germany for two years where she studied German and taught. Yet another Alumnae update form sent to Mrs. James M. Spencer claims that Morgan traveled for her health during the years of 1900-1903.

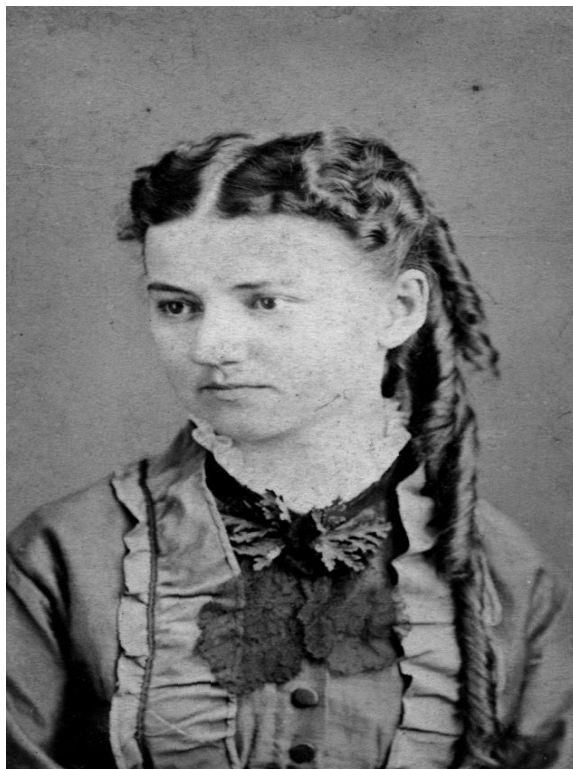
Morgan stated that she spent her time after 1900 in “Scientific investigation toward curing or lessening the nerve failure resulting from our systems of education” and she further stated, “I have lived for this purpose in Cleveland, Oberlin, New York City, Oakland, California, Saratoga, California” (Morgan, A. E. F., Alumnae record, 1905, Oberlin College Archive). It appears Morgan was referring to her work in encouraging physical exercise for female students aimed at improving their health during a time when they spent most of their hours in intellectual pursuits.

During her years at Wellesley College, Morgan made the claim that good mental and physical health are connected to exercise and organized her students into bicycle and other exercise clubs. From her belief in the connection between mental and physical well-being she developed her exercise regimen she named “bellecycle.” In 1893 she authored a book explaining how to engage in the art of bellecycle which outlined both the benefits and the methods for playing this game. Morgan’s book describes bellecycle as a game that is played in three levels or acts. The equipment consists of a target with a hanging net, a set of rings in graded sizes, and a set of “cues” in a quiver. There is a

complicated set of steps where the player first throws the set of rings and gets points for getting them into the net. Each ring is worth different points. Next, the player throws the rings at the pole extending from the center of the target and gets points for each one that stays on the pole. The points depend on the color of the ring. The third and final act of the game consists of a player throwing the rings to another player holding a cue and getting points for each one caught on the cue. The game becomes increasingly complicated since the rules state that if any player does not successfully catch all the rings, all players must start the acts over.

The instruction book contains a chapter on the bellecycle and art, as well as a chapter explaining the symbolism of each movement and each piece of equipment. Morgan (1897) wrote that the way to good health is to take one's vocation into relaxation by playing this game grounded in philosophy. Bellecycling seems to have become her passion in her last years.

Due to failing health, Morgan retired to Saratoga, California where "She had a little home of her own and was always occupied in intellectual work" (In Memoriam). She died on December 24, 1909 at the age of sixty-four.



Ellen Amanda Hayes

Courtesy of the Granville, Ohio Historical Society



Ellen Amanda Hayes was born in Granville, Ohio on September 23, 1851, the oldest of seven children. Her family supported education for all children and Ellen was home-schooled until the age of eight when she entered the public school in Centerville, Ohio ( Hayes, 1963; Lisska, 2004). She attended and graduated from the Granville Female Academy

After completing her schooling, Hayes taught in the local schools for five years while she saved money to pay for college. At last, she was able to attend Oberlin College where she spent three years studying so she could meet the requirements for entering a degree program. She eventually graduated in 1878 with a B.A. She focused her studies on mathematics, history, English literature, and Greek and Latin (Lisska, 2004).

After graduating from Oberlin College in 1878, she taught for one year at Adrian College in Michigan. She received a position at Wellesley College in 1879 (Palmieri, 1995) teaching mathematics and ten years later became department head. During her tenure at Wellesley College, Hayes became known as a “social radical” who did not “suffer fools gladly” (Hayes, E. 1851-1930. Faculty Biographical Files, Wellesley College). In fact, in 1897 a Department of Applied Mathematics was created as a resolution to an ongoing battle between Hayes and her colleagues in the mathematics department. She argued that the value of mathematics for her students was in the application rather than the pure science of math. Hayes was the department head and only faculty in the new department (Brown, 1932; Lisska, 2004; Palmieri, 1995). Her strong personality and independent thinking earned her a reputation as an outspoken radical.

Geraldine Gordon (1931), a Wellesley Girl from the class of 1900 described Hayes as:

entirely fearless, absolutely independent, and always scornful of compromise. The easy and conventional way of life was completely foreign to her nature. Even in her way of dress she followed a fashion of her own through many years regardless of what the rest of the world was wearing. This outward simplicity of life was only a symbol of the direct sincerity and honesty of her mind and heart. Her vigorous independence of spirit made her sometimes a difficult colleague. She knew she was not an easy person to work with, nor to live with. (p. 151)

According to Louise Brown (1932), a student and friend, Hayes believed the “dress of women absurd and absolutely refused to follow the fashion. She insisted on many pockets: the pocketless fashion indicated the propertyless position of women” (p. 28).

This independent refusal to compromise is visible in the alumni update forms she submitted to Oberlin College. The instructions on the 1908 form stated that “For men, the office address is preferred; for women the home address.” Hayes responded to those instructions with the word “Why?” (Hayes, E. A., Alumnae File, Oberlin College). Further, she attached a hand written note to her 1916 update addressed to Mr. George M. Jones, secretary of Oberlin College which requests that he discontinue using her middle name (Amanda) as she had “discarded it many years ago.” She went on to ask that her name appear “in the form in which it invariably appears elsewhere” (Hayes, E., 1851-1930. Correspondence. Hayes to Jones, G. M., n.d., Oberlin College Archives).

During her years at Wellesley College she authored *Letters to a College Girl* (1909) as well as several mathematics textbooks including: *Lessons in Higher Algebra* (1881); *Elementary Trigonometry* (1896); *Algebra for High Schools and Colleges* (1897); and *Calculus with Applications: An Introduction to the Mathematical Treatment of Science* (1900) although it appears from her writing throughout her life that astronomy was her first love. She was a founding member of the History of Science Society, and one of the first female members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Brown, 1931). In addition, Hayes was the only founding woman of the Geological Society in 1881 which is not surprising since her mother's family, the Wolcotts, were among the leading names in early American geology (Hayes, E., 1851-1930. Correspondence. Wellesley Collage Archives).

Hayes spent the last years at Wellesley teaching astronomy until her retirement in 1916. After retirement from the college she published an account of life in Granville, Ohio where she spent her childhood titled *Wild Turkeys and Tallow Candles* and a novel published in 1929 titled *The Sycamore Trail*. These last two books described her family's move to Ohio frontier and her childhood there. Unlike her previous scholarly work, these books were fond reminiscences written in story form.

Hayes' attention and influence went far beyond the Wellesley campus. Louise Brown noted that "It is evident from many instances of her concern for those in need that she was not by virtue of being a College Professor disassociated from activities as neighbor and citizen" (Hayes, p. 11). Hayes, considered to be the most radical of the Wellesley faculty, was active in the Socialist Party during her time at Wellesley College. In fact, she penned a socialist novel titled *Two Comrades* in 1912. Her activism carried

over into politics and she was nominated for Secretary of State for Massachusetts by the Socialist Party. The Socialist platform included:

- collective ownership of public utilities
- state health, unemployment, accidental, and old age insurances
- public work for the unemployed
- destruction of slum housing
- compulsory education with free meals for all children under the age of sixteen
- minimum wage and equal wages for men and women
- a 48 hour work week
- the right to strike
- equal suffrage
- the abolition of the United States Senate
- election of judges
- the abolishment of capital punishment (Woman named..., n.d.)

She was the first woman to appear on the ticket for a state position in Massachusetts and even though women could not vote, she received 14,000 votes (Woman named..., n.d. Lisska, 2004).

After her retirement from the college, she started her own monthly magazine, *Relay*, which was dedicated to socialist causes, so that she could get her more radical articles published. She used this publication to support workers' rights and other political causes that were not popular in mainstream society. In addition, she included an article

on astronomy in each issue. A few of the editions of *Relay* can be found in the Ellen Hayes collection at the Granville, Ohio Historical Society.

Retirement did not mean a quiet life for Ellen Hayes. In fact, at the age of seventy-six she, along with author Jon Dos Passos and Pulitzer prize winning poet, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and five other so-called “death marchers” were arrested and convicted (later reversed on appeal) for their activities in support of Sacco and Vanzetti during their trials for murder and robbery (Free Powers Hapgood, December 4, 1927). Hayes used the entire September, 1927 volume of *The Relay* to accuse state and federal officials of murdering Sacco and Vanzetti in order to preserve the “ruling class” in America. It is now widely believed that Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted due to their anarchist politics.

During this time, Hayes became a supporter of working class women and their families. According to Gordon (1931), Hayes expressed interest in the progress of the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers. This school was a central figure in a movement, which began in 1914, for education for women workers supported by an unlikely alliance between labor unions, the YMCA, colleges and universities, and suffragettes and other women interested in the plight of working women. The schools offered working women an opportunity to live on college campuses and increase their educations. The goal of the schools was to produce more educated citizens who were prepared to lead in the workplace and community. Dewey’s progressive pedagogical philosophy figured prominently in the student-centered learning environments.

Bryn Mawr’s summer school was just one of a list of schools that included, among others, the Wisconsin Summer School founded in 1925 (Roydhouse, 1984),

Southern Summer School founded in 1927 (Frederickson, 1984) and the Affiliated Schools for Workers, established in 1928, a loose affiliation of schools including the Vineyard Shore School for Women Workers (Heller, 1984). When the planning began for the Vineyard Shore School for Women Workers, Hayes joined the organizers. In 1929 when the school opened she left Wellesley and moved to the school where she served on the board of directors and taught the students at a weekly meeting in her home.

The Vineyard School differed from the Bryn Mawr Summer School in that it was an eight month school that began when the summer school ended. According to Hayes (1929) the entrance requirements were:

- Must be between twenty-one and thirty-five years of age
- Read and write English well enough to handle the school's work
- Three years experience in industry. (*The Relay*, November, 1929, p. 1)

The curriculum included:

- Speaking, reading, and writing the English language with a view to securing the habit of sound thinking and clear expression;
- The principles of science studied in the laboratory and out-of-doors;
- An outline history of human society from early times. (*The Relay*, November, 1929)

The Vineyard School also differed from previous women workers' schools in that the curriculum was not focused just on creating labor leaders. The Vineyard curriculum included "a cultural focus" (Roydhouse, 1984, p. 193) as well as economics and English reading and writing.

Hilda W. Smith, Dean of Bryn Mawr and Director of the Summer School, is quoted by Gordon (1931) concerning Hayes' work at the Vineyard Shore School:

Then began a delightful winter of study and play, a winter of close association and personal friendship between Ellen Hayes and the women from the factories and mills, with whose lives she had now identified herself. . . . Once a week during the spring she conducted a class on geology of the Hudson River. . . The afternoon when the school went to her house for a talk and a coffee party was an event to which every student looked forward. Around the fire they sat on the floor, Miss Hayes in a big chair in their midst, while the discussion went on,--- discussions of matters political and social, concerning industry, literature, the arts, the future of human life and the future of the state. At every turn her keen insight, her long experience and her unusual faculty for expressing thought in beautiful and simple terms illuminated the discussion... Not only in the daily life of the students did Miss Hayes take an active part but she was interested in every detail of the new plans. . . . On her own initiative she sent out letters to her friends asking for contributions to the scholarship fund. . . It was especially appropriate that, at the suggestion of Louise Brown, many friends of Miss Hayes sent contributions in her honor, to start an equipment fund for the proposed "Ellen Hayes Laboratory." (p. 152)

Brown (1932) stated that Hayes' work at the Vineyard Shore School continued until her death on October 27, 1930. However, in a letter from Hayes to Mrs. White (unknown identity), Hayes wrote (in an explanation of why she used the Vineyard School letterhead) that she had "no official connection with it" (p. 2). I suspect she made this

statement to be clear that she was not employed by the Vineyard Shore School. It was not unusual to see letters on various letterheads in several of the archives I visited. The women probably saved and then used any stationary they came across. However, that is just speculation. I did not find any evidence that Hayes had a falling out with Vineyard administrators.

During her final illness she continued to teach. She taught geology to the stone masons, advanced mathematics to the workers building her stairway, and discussed the “ethics of a system which rewards owners more than workers” with her doctors, nurses, and the workers around her (Brown, 1932, pp. 13-14). In addition, Hayes, who loved scientific research, left her brain to The Wilder Brain Collection at Cornell University and the ashes of Ellen Hayes were buried in her hometown of Granville, Ohio (Brown, 1931). The Granville Times (November 13, 1930) claimed that her “sturdy pioneer ancestry, coupled with the pioneer environment of her childhood, explains the intellectual vigor and originality which marked the career of Miss Hayes.”



**Margaret E. Stratton**

Margaret Elizabeth Stratton was born in Stratford, Connecticut on April 17, 1844. She graduated from the Sedgwick Academy in 1860 and then taught school in nearby Putney, Connecticut. After the Civil War ended she taught newly freed ex-slaves in Virginia and Florida for ten years (Oberlin College Alumni Necrology; Manly, 1926; Wellesley Archives). In 1876 Stratton entered Oberlin College and graduated in 1878 with a diploma in the Literary Course (General Catalogue of Oberlin College, 1883-1908; Oberlin College Alumni Necrology).

She served as Assistant Principal of the Oberlin College Women's Department for the next three years until 1881 when she was called to Wellesley College to help develop and serve as department head of English and Rhetoric. While serving as Assistant Principal, Stratton worked on a Masters degree which was awarded in 1882. In an alumni survey requested by Oberlin College, she wrote of her experience at Oberlin stating that

I have always regarded my entrance in the college a turning point in my life, not only because it gave me a rich heritage from which to draw inspiration, but also because it opened up to me great opportunities for service, and experiences of inestimable value. The college has always stood to me for the true life of the spirit in a world of material values. (p. 3)

It should be noted that Stratton was thirty-two years old when she entered Oberlin and her maturity was probably a factor in acquiring both the position at Oberlin and the position of department head at Wellesley College.

Stratton's early years at Wellesley were what Palmieri (1995) quoted Katharine Lee Bates as calling the Oberlin years, since President Shafer was an Oberlin graduate as well as faculty members Ellen Hayes, Anne Morgan, Adeline Hawes, and, of course, Stratton herself. She served Wellesley College as department head and professor for fifteen years. She then served four additional years as the first Dean. Her duties included being in charge of

all that relates to the public devotional exercises of the college and is chairman of the committee in charge of stated religious services. She is the authority referred to in all cases of ordinary discipline, and is the chairman of the committee which includes heads of houses and permission officers, all these officers are directly responsible to her. (Converse, 1939, p. 59)

She retired from her duties at Wellesley College in 1899 (Manly, 1926).

Although her intention was retirement, two years later Stratton agreed to become the first Dean of Women at the University of Colorado at Boulder (Oberlin College Alumni Necrology, 1925-1930; Oberlin College Alumni Magazine, 1926, February; Westermeier, 1976). Stratton is quoted by Manly (1926, January 1) as saying that she accepted the Colorado position "Only as a wedge for the work of some younger woman" (p. 1). Stratton, like so many of the other subjects of this study was dedicated to the expansion of opportunity for women in institutions of higher learning. As America moved westward, so did the influence of these women whether through strategic recommendations for faculty and administrative appointments or, like Stratton, in taking on the job herself.

Stratton spent three years at the University of Colorado during which her duties were to oversee the religious, social, intellectual and physical activities of women students. In addition, she taught Comparative Literature and dedicated her efforts to improving the situation for women students endorsing a “self-government” policy supported by the Women’s League on campus (Westermeier, 1976). She was provided with a small cottage and paid \$900 per year (Davis, 1965 quoting Regents Report). Stratton retired from this position in 1904 and returned to her home in Stratford, Connecticut although she traveled much of the next few years (Stratton, M., Oberlin College Necrology file, 1925-1930). While on a trip to Washington DC in 1923, Margaret Stratton was paralyzed by a stroke and after a lengthy stay in a sanitarium she returned home and died two years later on December 17, 1925 (Stratton, M., Oberlin College Necrology, 1925-1930).



Harvard University, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, 20036418\_1  
Mary Holman Ladd

Mary Holman Ladd was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts on April 15, 1853. She attended the Chauncy Hall School in Boston (Cushing, 1895) and entered Cornell University in September, 1872. She graduated in 1875 with A.B. degree from the Arts program and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. She received an A.M. degree in 1878 (Cornell University Library, 2005; Vital Statistics, n.d.). Ladd was in the literature program and her Master's thesis was titled "The Influence of Political Events upon National Literature, Illustrated by the History and Literature of England."

According to a Cornell University alumni form submitted by Ladd (n.d.), she taught in a private school of Miss Anna Brackett located in New York City from 1876-1879. The same form reveals that she served as a teacher and "assistant in management" at the Chauncy Hall School in Boston from 1879-1896. Cushing (1895) stated that Ladd taught Latin at this school from 1880-1882..

Ladd listed her interests as Director of the New England Women's Club, Director of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, President for the University Education of Women, and President of the Women's College Club from 1899-1901. It is interesting to note that she did not mention her membership in the ACA although she appears in the membership roles as late as 1916 (The Journal of the ACA, 1916).

**S. Alice Brown**

There is little information to be found on Sara (or Sarah) Alice Brown. She attended the Girls Classical School operated by Bessie Capen in Boston (Marion Talbot papers, box 2, folder 5, University of Chicago Archives and Special Collections). She graduated from Smith College in 1881 (Smith College Circular, 1880, p. 26). After graduating, she taught Latin at the Chauncey–Hall School from 1880-1882 (Cushing, 1895).

I could find no information from 1882 until 1904 when Brown received a Doctor of Laws from Cornell College in Iowa. Later she became a member of Phi Beta Kappa in 1948 as a Cornell College alumna (Phi Beta Kappa Records, Cornell College Alumnae Records).

In addition, Talbot and Rosenberry (1931) stated that in 1890 Brown was appointed chairman of a committee to present the pros and cons of a resolution to have the ACA join the National Council of Women. She was instructed to “do its utmost in support of the proposition” (p. 293). A search of the 1916 AAUW roster reveals that Brown is not listed as a member and the current AAUW archivist was unable to find information on Brown. In fact, she asked me to share the data I have uncovered.



Ellen Henrietta Swallow Richards

Courtesy of the MIT Museum

Much of the biographical data concerning Ellen Henrietta Swallow Richards comes from a book/memorial written by Caroline Hunt. Hunt was asked by a committee of friends and family to write a memorial biography of Richards' life. Hunt's connection to Richards was colleague and probably protégé in her work in the field of family and consumer sciences. Marjorie East, Hunt's biographer, described her exhaustive search for the letters and documents Hunt used and cited in her book about the life of Richards. However, she never found those documents (East, 2001) so Hunt's book remains the closest thing to a primary source for biographical information on Richards.

Richards was born in Dunstable, Massachusetts on December 3, 1842 to parents who were both teachers (Clarke, 1973; Howe, 1882; Kunz, n.d). Her parents home schooled her until she was old enough to attend Westford Academy (Clarke, 1973). Her father purchased a general store in Westford so they could send Ellen to the academy located there where she studied mostly Latin with some mathematics, French, and composition in preparation for college (Hunt, 1912).

While at the academy, Richards tutored students who needed help and tried to save her wages for her college fund. She left Westford Academy in 1862 with plans to teach; again, trying to earn money to pay for college (Hunt, 1912). She also helped her father run the store and kept the books for that enterprise while attempting to improve her scholarly skills.



Hunt (1912) reported that even as a child Richards showed interest in the two “great passions” that would guide her life. Swallow’s life was formed around “a longing for usefulness and a love of pioneering” (p. 2). Hunt argued that

These passions her early life in an isolated community and among profoundly religious people doubtless tended to intensify. She was destined to give herself for others, but to do it in unique ways, and after the fashion of explorers, joyously and enthusiastically, so that the record of her life and labors is the story of happy excursions into fresh fields of service. (p. 2)

Although Hunt did not include the love of education in her list of Richard’s passions, it is clear that in her early years what can only be described as a *need* for learning and formal education consumed her days. The two or three years after she left Westford Academy were some of her most difficult times as she tried to find a college that would admit her as well as a constant effort to raise the funds to allow her to go to college.

At last, in 1868 Richards entered Vassar College as a special student in the junior class. In 1870 she became an official member of the Vassar senior class and graduated that year (Clarke, 1973; Hunt, 1912). While at Vassar, she came under the influence of Maria Mitchell, a well known astronomer, and C. A. Farrar, the head of the department of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (Hunt, 1912). She finally chose to focus on chemistry because it would be more helpful to humankind than astronomy (Hunt, 192).

In a letter written by Richards to her mother during the Vassar years she complains “The only trouble here is they won’t let us study enough. They are afraid we shall break down and you know the reputation of the college is at stake, can girls get a college education without injuring their health?” (quoted by Hunt, 1912, p. 43). In

addition to her studies Richards supported herself by tutoring her colleagues in the sciences and managed to obtain special permission to study a few extra hours per week (Hunt, 1912).

After graduating from Vassar College in 1870, Richards began looking for a place to further her studies in the sciences. This was not an easy task since none of the universities admitted women to the science programs. Finally, in 1871 the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) admitted Swallow as the first female student to enter any “strictly scientific school in the United States” (Hunt, 1912, p. 81).

J. D. Runkle, the President of MIT offered her a place at the Institute without charging her any fees at all. Hunt (1912) quoted Swallow as follows:

I thought it was out of the goodness of his heart because I was a poor girl with my own way to make that he remitted the fee, but I later learned it was because he could say I was not a student, should any of the trustees or students make a fuss about my presence. Had I realized upon what basis I was taken, I would not have gone. (p. 88)

Nevertheless, she entered MIT as a special student and what MIT’s administration called “The Swallow Experiment” began (Clarke, 1973).

However, Richards was clearly aware of her precarious status as the only female at MIT as she decided to make herself useful to both her colleagues and her professors. Her strategy included the womanly household skills such as cleaning, mending, and minor nursing. In a letter to her mother written on February 11, 1871 she discussed her strategy to open the doors of MIT to women.

I hope in a quiet way I am winning a way which others will keep open. Perhaps

the fact that I am not a Radical or a believer in the all powerful ballot for women to right her wrongs and that I do not scorn womanly duties, but claim it as a privilege to clean up and sort of supervise the room and sew things, etc., is winning me stronger allies than anything else. Even Prof. A. accords me his sanction when I sew his papers or tie up a sore finger or dust the table, etc. Last night Prof. B found me useful to mend *his suspenders* which had come to grief, much to the amusement of young Mr. C. I try to keep all sorts of such things as needles, thread, pins, scissors, etc., round and they are getting to come to me for everything they want and they almost always find it and as Prof. \_\_\_\_ said the other day----- “When we are in doubt about anything we always go to Miss Swallow.” They leave messages with me and come to expect me to know where everything and everybody is ---so you see I am useful in a decidedly general way so they can’t say *study* spoils me for anything else (quoted by Hunt, 1912, p. 91).

From the standpoint of a modern day feminist I was both shocked and somewhat disgusted as I read Richard’s description of her strategy to secure her position as a student at MIT. This is a place in the research where standpoint becomes important in understanding Richard’s motivation and, perhaps, strategy.

There we were, what only could be called two feminists, staring across the pages of time and history, wanting the same thing but neither of us would be able to recognize the strategy of the other as acceptable given our places in history. Her standpoint would not allow her to march on Washington, DC and my standpoint would not allow me to sew a button on a professor’s shirt. As Sprague (2005) pointed out, “the subject is not just a source of information, but rather a person who is constructing meaning for the

researcher” (141). By recognizing and honoring our different standpoints I was able to understand her activities as strategy that given the times, was probably the only road to success for her and others in her position. Once again, she was working within the system and recognized roles for women to gain entrance into the elite, all-male world at MIT. A more militant stance would have most likely threatened her future work with these men who, like Richards, were products of their time. They expected women to behave in a certain way and Richards was already expanding the boundaries of the role of women simply by joining them in the academy. Much like her colleague, friend, and fellow ACA founder, Alice Freeman Palmer, who was described as having a “subtle, powerful, and virile intelligence” and yet possessing a “gracious womanliness” (Record of a Meeting, 1906, p. 7) Richards used her “womanliness” strategically with an understanding of the expectations of her male instructors and colleagues. Marion Talbot, dean of women at the University of Chicago is reported to have used a similar strategy as illustrated by a story reported by Howard W. Mort in the *University of Chicago Magazine*, 1936). According to Mort, Talbot received a note from university president William R. Harper asking her to come to his house to play the piano because he was lonely. Talbot, much like Richards, accommodated the president and played until he fell asleep (Talbot, 1936).

Despite my initial reaction, when I was able to recognize this standpoint; Richards’ strategy resonated with me since every feminist act still must be weighed against the possible repercussions of questioning the status quo and alienating those in power. I was relieved to read her final line that explained that her willingness to provide these housewifely duties was to prove that education did not destroy her womanliness. In

fact, her strategy seemed to be successful as she was given many opportunities to assist her professors in their research both in the laboratory and in the field. She spent four years at MIT as a student and as the assistant in the chemical laboratories where she continued to develop her interest and expertise in the science of sanitation (Hunt, 1912). In fact, she did most of the research on water purity and developed methods of sampling water that are still used today.

In 1873, Richards graduated from MIT with a B. S. in Chemistry and in the same year received a Master's from Vassar College. She continued to assist at MIT and had a small business analyzing products such as wallpaper and fabrics, often for state health departments (Hunt, 1912). She was not awarded a doctorate because MIT did not want a woman to receive the first doctorate in chemistry to be awarded by that university.

During these years she also worked with Professor Robert Hallowell Richards, head of MIT's department of mining engineering. She traveled with Richards to the copper mines of the upper peninsula of Michigan where she served as chemist for his research on copper smelting. She eventually married Professor Richards and worked with him throughout the rest of their lives as illustrated by their working honeymoon which included his entire class in mining engineering for field experience (Clarke, 1973; Hunt, 1912).

She also developed a rich and amazing professional life for herself. In fact, both the disciplines of Environmental Science and Family and Consumer Sciences claim Richards as their founder. In 1876 she was appointed the position of instructor in the MIT women's laboratory that was funded and built through her efforts and with the

financial assistance of women's groups. Clarke (1973), referring to the Women's Laboratory, said that

From this three-story building came the most advanced---often the only---proven scientific knowledge of products and processes for American consumers. Since industry and government hadn't bothered, her home laboratory introduced product and process testing and regulations for them, too. (p. 69)

Her interests in the quality of food, air, and water revolved around good health first and cost and value second. Her work led to the development of a new area of study centered on the home and health of the family which helped to shape major changes in social policy in America. In 1899, Richards and Melvil Dewey (designed the Dewey Decimal System) organized the Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics where a curriculum for home economics at the college and university level was created based on the principles of sanitary science (Vincenti, 2002).

In 1884, Richards became MIT's first woman faculty member when she was appointed Instructor in Sanitary Chemistry and taught male students. In 1890, she began teaching a course she developed in Sanitary Engineering which was the first of its kind anywhere in the world (Hunt, 1912). Richards, like so many of the other women in this study, incorporated a belief in the duty of her students to include social service in their professions and incorporated that belief into her pedagogy.

Richards' goal throughout her years at MIT was to not only open the gate to MIT for women but to remove that gate completely and forever. She succeeded in carefully planned steps from a segregated chemistry laboratory to faculty positions to a "ladies lounge" always carefully moving forward and offering success as her major supporting

argument for further admission to women. She paid the tuition of several young women and mentored them in a wide variety of ways from finding them housing and jobs to placing them in professional careers when they graduated. In this way, she created a network of her students who became colleagues and helped her open the way for many other students in the sciences (Clarke, 1973).

In 1881, two years after her college graduation, Marion Talbot enrolled in classes at the Women's Laboratory as a special student under Richards. Robert Clarke (1973) argued that it was Richards, not Talbot, who was behind the founding of the ACA. He offered as evidence her intention of keeping the founding meeting a small group and at the first official meeting she served as chair, appointing Marion Talbot as secretary (Clarke, 1973, Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931). He further argued that the Talbot "idea" for the ACA was actually carefully planted by Richards (p. 88). Richards chose to serve as a Director along with Freeman and Morgan rather than president (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931).

Clarke (1973) also points out that the first three major projects of the ACA were all scientific studies focused on issues that interested Richards and furthered her work:

1. In order to disprove the popular theory that higher education ruined women's health they did a nationwide survey of the health of female college students.
2. An effort to broaden access by women to industrial training which resulted in programs like home economics in the public schools.
3. Promoting the belief that hygiene is central to a healthy home and society, Richards organized a sanitary science club within the ACA.

Additionally, in 1909 Richards was made chairperson of the Euthenics committee.

According to Talbot and Rosenberry (1931) Richards coined that term and defined it as “the science of controllable environment” (p. 177). Richards used the term “euthenics” in her book *The Cost of Shelter* (1905) and defined it as improving the conditions of the environment in which we live (living conditions, education, medical care, food source, etc.) so that we can be healthier and happier.

It is easy to see that these early endeavors reflected the interests of Richards. However, several of the other founding women, including Talbot, made sanitary science and the family and home their life’s work. Clarke raises an interesting and provocative question about Richards’ role in the founding and direction of the ACA although most of the literature gives credit to Talbot and her mother. This is a place where I, as researcher, must be aware of my particular prejudices. I am aware that I want to believe that Talbot is the major force in the founding of the ACA so I must carefully consider the evidence for both cases. There is more primary evidence that the idea originated with Talbot (Talbot, M., 1854-1948, Ellen H. Swallow Richards, March 30, 1931, box 6, folder 8, University of Chicago Special Collections; Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931) and Clarke’s version is, after all, his interpretation of the data.

Richards was also instrumental in developing the first university extension school in America. According to the catalogue, the purpose of the extension school was to encourage women to study on a daily basis (Clarke, 1973).

Richards authored at least 14 books, traveled the country giving presentations on many subjects including women’s education, hygiene and environmental science. She served as Alumnae Trustee for Vassar College and founded the American Home



Economics Association (Kunz, n.d.). She was instrumental in consolidating the regional women's collegiate organizations into the newly titled American Association of University Women in 1921 (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931). She helped municipalities realize the need for health departments and clean air, water, and food sources. By her own example she convinced MIT and many other colleges that the female mind was as capable as the male mind and thereby opened the gates to higher education in the sciences for women. However, a good deal of her time and energy was dedicated to the implementation of her ideas through public presentations, fund raising, and maintaining an immense network of her students and colleagues who were ready to assist her in those efforts.

Ellen Henrietta Swallow Richards died on March 30, 1911 in her home (Clarke, 1973) at the age of 69 years. She left behind an impressive and rich legacy including the founding of at least two new educational disciplines, a major contribution to safer, healthier homes and lives for not only Americans but for people worldwide. Not the least of her accomplishments was to prove that the female mind is equal to the demands of higher education, scientific research, and could change the world if given the opportunity.



Florence M. Cushing

Courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, Vassar College

Florence M. Cushing graduated as class valedictorian from Vassar College in 1874. After graduating, she worked as the Vassar librarian for two years (Vassar Encyclopedia). Cushing's involvement with Vassar College continued throughout her life. In 1887 she became the first Vassar graduate to be appointed to the Board of Trustees where she served as a lifetime member until her retirement in 1923 (Horowitz, 1984). At that time she was appointed Trustee Emerita and in 1927 a dormitory was named Cushing Hall in her honor (Vassar Encyclopedia; Horowitz, 1984).

Cushing was active in forming several women's groups. She was instrumental in founding the first school for girls in Boston (Girls Latin School of Boston) which opened in 1877, a founder of the Massachusetts Society for the Education of Women, the Women's Education Association, the Nantucket Maria Mitchell Association, and the Society for Promoting Scientific Research Among Women (Florence M. Cushing, 1928; Vassar Encyclopedia).

Cushing was a leader in the ACA serving two years as the second president from 1883 – 1885 (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931) and served as secretary at various times. In addition, she served on many committees throughout her lifetime including the membership, institutional admission, trust fund, finance, investigation, endowment, fellowship, and administration committees. According to Talbot and Rosenberry (1931), Cushing served the ACA for over forty years and “remained until the close of her life, the staunch, sane friend of the Association and of all movements for the higher education of women” (p. 16). Cushing died in 1928.

**Edith E. Metcalf**

Edith Ely Metcalf was born in Bangor, Maine on May 18, 1859. A few years later her family moved to Oberlin, Ohio. All five Metcalf children attended Oberlin College although Edith only attended the Oberlin Academy for two years from 1874-1876. She then transferred to Wellesley College and graduated in 1880. She was class secretary and was active in several organizations including a sorority, The Shakespeare, Glee, and Beethoven clubs as well as participating in crew (Wellesley College Alumni Files).

After graduation from Wellesley College, Metcalf did post graduate work at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and studied in England and France (Wellesley College, Edith E. Metcalf). She then moved to Chicago to study at the Chicago Bible College and became involved in the work at Hull House, a settlement house established by Jane Addams, 1860-1935, and Ellen Gates Starr, 1859-1940, in 1889. The mission of Hull House and other settlement houses was to provide educational and economic aid to those in need. Metcalf also built a house for the poor and established a free kindergarten in Chicago (Wellesley College Alumni Lists). Metcalf lived on the second floor of her house and the first and third floors were used as space for the people she worked with through her connection with Hull House and the kindergarten she built and financed (Metcalf, E. E. alumnae file, Thomas, 1929). Metcalf's brother helped her establish a fund at Oberlin College for the purpose of making small loans to girls who were in financial need after she was told about two young women who would have to drop out of school because they could not afford textbooks (Metcalf, E. E. alumni file, unsigned correspondence to E. E. Metcalf, February 3, 1915).

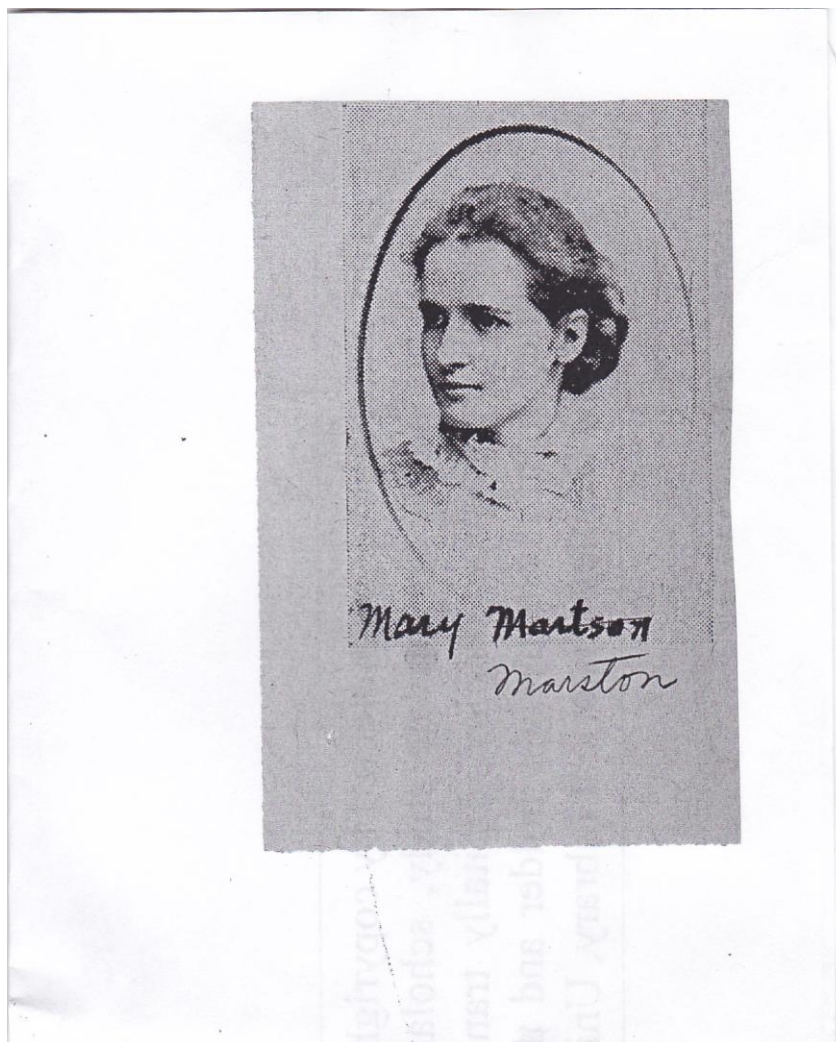
Metcalf was listed as living in Elyria, Ohio (probably parents' address since Elyria is in same county as Oberlin, Ohio) in the 1886 Register of the ACA. She served as president of the Oberlin chapter of the ACA in 1916 (AAUW Journal, 1916) so was probably an active member most of her life. She died in 1929.

**Harriet Cummings Blake Pingree**

Blake Pingree was born in Woburn, Massachusetts on May 18, 1859. Her father, Norton Blake was a leather manufacturer (Leonard, 1914; Wellesley College Archives, Alumnae Biographical Files). When she was sixteen she attended the New England Conservatory of Music and then entered Wellesley College in 1876 (Wellesley College Archives, Alumnae Biographical Files).

After graduating from Wellesley, Blake Pingree studied the Dewey Decimal system at the Columbia College Library School under Melvil Dewey and was employed by the Boston Public Library for the next five years. She left the Boston Public Library and worked as a cataloguer organizing large collections at both public and private libraries throughout the northeastern states until she was married to Frederick J. Pingree in 1899 (Wellesley College Archive, Alumnae Biographical Files).

According to Leonard, (1914) Blake Pingree was against women's suffrage and was active in several women's clubs although by 1916 she was no longer listed as a member of the ACA (Register of the ACA, 1916).



**Courtesy of Bentley Historical Library**

**University of Michigan**

Mary Olive Marston was born in New Sharon, Maine on October 14, 1854. She was admitted to the University of Michigan in the fall of 1873 where she studied Latin and Greek (University of Michigan, Marston necrology file). While at the University of Michigan, Marston wrote to her family weekly, often asking for money for clothing and other expenses (Marston, M. O. Papers, 1870-1924, Correspondence.). She was friends with classmates and later, co-founders of the ACA, Alice Freeman Palmer and Lucy Andrews and they shared an apartment off campus.

After graduating in 1876, Marston went to Wellesley College to teach Greek from 1877-1879. She left Wellesley to go home and help her father with his business problems. Although she longed to return to Wellesley she was forced to stay in Wisconsin to help her family. In a letter to her future husband, Horace Bailey Walmsley dated February 9, 1881 Marston said

But if I were a man with recognized business ability and a little experience, I believe Papa would be only too glad to give it all up into my hands---perhaps even go away and leave me to manage as I might please.

She eventually married Horace who was a University of Michigan graduate in the class of 1878. They had a daughter named Alice Freeman Walmsley, named after her friend and colleague, Alice Freeman Palmer. They lived in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Marston Walmsley listed her occupation as “housewife” on her alumnae card and on the line asking for advanced degrees she wrote “None (but mother of five children, which is better)” (University of Michigan Necrology file).

According to her alumnae records she was a member of the official Board of Visitors at the University of Wisconsin from 1895-1899 representing first the seventh



district and then serving as the at-large member (Biennial Report of the Board of Regents, 1886), and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. She was also a founding member of the Eau Claire Women's Club in 1895 and served as the first second vice president (*History of the Eau Claire Woman's Club, 1895*).

In 1904 Marston Walmsley sold her family home and moved to a new planned community in Illinois named Zion City. The founder of Zion City, John Alexander Dowie, envisioned a Christian utopian community where citizens could "live in heaven on earth" (Cook, 1996, p. ix) which included a college. According to the Eau Claire Leader (August 26, 1904, p. 25, col.3) Marston Walmsley was going to Zion City to teach Greek at the Zion City College where she lived at least until 1910. It is unclear if her religious convictions played a part in her decision to move to Zion City but that is a logical explanation for this major change in her life. She took three of her children with her and at least some of her children settled in Zion City and appeared in city directories until 1922 (from personal correspondence with Zion Historical Society Trustee, Tim Morse).

It is unclear when she left Zion City and her position at the college. She traveled the world during her late sixties, returning to Wisconsin at the age of 72 (Nesbit, 2006). Marston Walmsley died on September 16, 1939 at the age of eighty-four and is buried in Eau Claire (University of Michigan necrology file).

### Lucy C. Andrews

Lucy Caroline Andrews was born in Molokai, Hawaii to parents who began their sojourn in Hawaii as missionaries and teachers but became the wealthy owners of a sugar plantation. She and her brother came to the United States to attend the preparatory school Oberlin College in Ohio (Bordin, 1993). After only three months she moved to her uncle's house in Flint, Michigan and received a high school diploma in preparation for her entrance at the University of Michigan in 1872.

While at the university, Andrews developed a close relationship with Alice Freeman (Palmer) and soon became roommates and, according to Bordin (1993) had a "Boston marriage" which lasted for a large part of their lives, certainly long after they graduated. Boston marriages, a phrase thought to be popularized by Henry James' novel *The Bostonians* (Faderman, 1993) are relationships between women who live together for an extended period of time and share all aspects of their lives, much like a traditional marriage. These relationships may or may not be sexual in nature (Espin, 1993; Faderman, 1993; Rothblum & Brehony, 1993) and were common among single women who did not have a man to take care of them, particularly educated, professional women (Kendall, 1975; Rothblum & Brehony, 1993). Since it was generally believed that women did not have a sex drive, women in Boston marriages could openly express their affection for each other without public censor (Kendall, 1975). They could live conventional lives either as spinsters or married women and still have these passionate relationships (Faderman, 1993; Rothblum & Brehony 1993). Faderman (1993) stated that women in Boston marriages were often career women with financial independence

living in long-term relationships. They shared finances, property, vacations, and most other aspects of a marriage. The Boston marriage served a purpose in a society where single women could not fraternize with men. This arrangement gave a single woman companionship and a socially acceptable escort when out in society. However, those opposed to higher education for women argued that such arrangements would cause “race suicide” since those women would not produce children (Kendall, 1975).

Andrews received an A. B. in education in 1876 and began teaching algebra at Ann Arbor High School and then spent a year teaching math and Latin at the Detroit Female Seminary. After that time she took a one year position at the Oshkosh Normal School. She then accepted a position at Wellesley College teaching ethics where her friend Alice Palmer was president (Bordin, 1973; Andrews, L. C., University of Michigan necrology file). Freeman Palmer, then president, brought her to Wellesley College where she taught until 1887 when she resigned probably due to the factionalization that took place at Wellesley at that time. According to Bordin (1993), this event ended her close relationship with Palmer; however, according to the Harcourt Place Seminary brochure for 1887, Freeman Palmer actually recommended Andrews for the position of principal and instructor in Mental and Moral Philosophy at that newly founded school for girls in Gambier, Ohio.

She served as principal and taught for the next three years, from 1887 to 1889 at the Harcourt Place Seminary for Girls (Bordin, 1993; Nesbit, 2006). There is some disagreement in the data concerning the order in which Andrews taught at these schools but it seems to be accurate that she taught at all of them. It is unclear what happened next in her life but by 1900 she had moved back to the east coast and started a business in

Orange, New Jersey importing Armenian lace. She conducted this enterprise at least until 1926. She is listed as the “American Agent” on a business card in her necrology file at the University of Michigan. According to Bordin (1993), the “Turks’ harsh treatment of the Armenian people was a cause closely embraced by organized women” (pp. 72-73) so her business may have been based on social activism.

I was unable to find any evidence that Lucy C. Andrews was a member of the ACA or AAUW other than her part in the original founding meetings. Andrews died on October 15, 1939 at the age of eighty-six in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

**Sarah L. Miner**

According to Ancestry.com, a large database utilized by people interested in geneology, Sarah L. Miner was born in 1852 in Hyde Park, Massachusetts. Her occupation is listed as school teacher in the 1880 census and it seems likely that that is the correct Sarah L. Miner.

I could find little data on Sarah L. Miner beyond Talbot and Rosenberry's (1931) mention of her name and that she graduated from Boston University in 1877. Her name does not appear in the ACA Register of 1886 membership list.

The Boston University Office of the Registrar confirmed that she graduated in 1877 with a Bachelor of Arts from the College of Liberal Arts (personal correspondence, November 16, 2012). According to the Registrar's office, the *Boston University Alumni Directory* (1924) stated that Miner died in 1892. Her early death may explain the lack of information I was able to find. It is interesting that she is the only one of the seventeen women who died at an early age.



**Alice Hayes**

**Courtesy of AAUW Archives, Washington, DC**

Alice Hayes was born on December 18, 1858 in Somerset, New Hampshire to Henry and Elizabeth Hayes who soon moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts where she graduated from the local high school and then went on to Vassar College (Miss Alice Hayes obituary, n. d.; Vassar College Biographic files, 1900). She graduated from Vassar College in 1881 and is listed in the ACA 1886 Register as a member.

After graduation from Vassar she became a special student in mathematics under Professor James Mills Pierce at Radcliffe College. According to her obituary she spent much of her life abroad and studied in Germany. Her necrology file contains a letter of introduction from Vassar College president James Monroe Taylor to the Minister of Public Instruction in Rome, Italy. She worked as a correspondent to several newspapers and magazines as well as a reviewer for *The Nation* as well as several others. She also worked as a genealogist.

Solomon (1985) reported that

In 1891 Alice Hayes, a writer in *The North American Review*, attacked the social inequalities in the university system. She published the results of her survey of the “pecuniary aid” available to female students at leading colleges, including Boston, Cornell, California, Kansas, Michigan, Syracuse, Wesleyan, Wisconsin, Bryn Mawr, Smith, Vassar, Wellesley, and the “Harvard Annex.” The answer to the question posed in her study “Can a Poor Girl Go to College?” was emphatically no. Hayes found that the sums given were so small that recipients had to be students “Who have almost adequate private resources.”

Solomon’s footnote included no further information on Hayes. However, minutes of the Vassar College Student Aid Society from 1888 report that Hayes wanted to form an

organization to give financial aid to students of Vassar College who were in need of assistance. The Society was made up of faculty, students, alumnae, and any woman who had a connection with Vassar College and would be willing to pay dues which would be used to aid students in need. They formed branches in various cities or states to accommodate alumnae and other members who had relocated (Vassar Students' Aid Society, subject file, 25.80)

The same Alice Hayes that wrote the above study also wrote *My Leper Friends: an Account of Personal Work among Lepers and of Their Daily Life in India*, 1891, and *The Horsewoman*, 1903 which is a "how-to" book for women interested in learning to ride horses. Another publication authored by Alice Hayes and written during her lifetime is the entry on woman's suffrage in the *Bulletin of Bibliographic and Dramatic Index*, volume 8 published in 1915. Hayes returned to Cambridge where she died on May 6, 1927.





Alice Freeman Palmer

Courtesy of Wellesley College Special Collections

Alice Elvira Freeman Palmer was born in Coleville, New York on February 21, 1855 to James Warren Freeman, a farmer, and his seventeen year old wife, Elizabeth Josephine (Taylor & Glasscock, 1975). Freeman Palmer's mother was a teacher and social activist whose causes included temperance and better living conditions for women and children (Palmer, 1908). According to George Palmer, Alice's husband and biographer, her childhood was lived in poverty and her education limited to the village school. However, she taught herself to read at the age of three and her parents modeled a life of learning as during her early years her father decided to become a doctor and studied medicine for two years.

After changing his profession, Freeman Palmer's father moved the family from the farm to the town of Windsor where she could attend the Windsor Academy (Palmer, 1908). Freeman Palmer found her calling during her years at Windsor Academy and decided to go to college but her parents did not support this decision, largely due to lack of funding. In fact, they told her that they had only enough money to send one child to college and that would be her brother so he could support the family in later years (Palmer, 1908). George Palmer recounted Alice's response:

Alice declared that she meant to have a college degree if it took her till she was fifty to get it. If her parents could help her, even partially, she would promise never to marry until she had herself put her brother through college and given to each of her sisters whatever education they might wish---a promise subsequently performed. She pointed out the importance to all the family of her becoming one of its supports instead of one of its dependents. The discussions were long and grave, but her judgment finally prevailed. She was to graduate from the

Academy at seventeen, and it was agreed that she should then immediately enter college. (p. 42)

She chose the University of Michigan because it was newly coeducational and she believed that the education in women's colleges was inferior to that of men's colleges (Palmer, 1908).

Freeman Palmer did not pass the entrance examination, mostly due to her lack of access to Greek, Latin, and higher mathematics. President Angell, after interviewing Freeman Palmer, gave her a six week trial period during which she had to keep up her studies while at the same time make up her deficiencies. She readily agreed to this unusual arrangement and succeeded in meeting his expectations (McGuigan, 1970; Palmer, 1908).

After this trial by fire, Freeman Palmer settled into the role of leadership among the eleven female students at the university at that time. She became particular friends with Lucy C. Andrews and Mary O. Marston (Walmsley) who remained her friends and colleagues throughout her life which sheds some light on why Andrews and Marston were involved in the founding of the ACA.

Her family continued to struggle to send her small amounts of money but in her junior year the family could no longer help her due to financial crises of their own. She was referred to a teaching job in Illinois by President Angell and became the principal of the school in Ottawa, Illinois at the age of twenty (Palmer, 1908). She spent a year in Ottawa, working, trying to keep up with her studies, and sending money to her family. She tried to save a portion of her salary so she could return to the University of Michigan

and after a year she did return to finish her studies and receive her hard-earned degree in 1876 (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931).

After graduation Freeman Palmer needed to find work to assist her family as well as support herself. Her father continued to have financial difficulties and her brother and sisters needed the promised assistance in paying for their educations. She accepted a position teaching Greek and Latin at a boarding school in Geneva, Wisconsin with over a third of her salary paying for her sister's schooling. Freeman Palmer found that she did not like the closed, limited atmosphere of a girl's boarding school and after one year returned to Ann Arbor to pursue a doctoral degree in history. The degree was new and Freeman Palmer was one of the first women to attempt it (Palmer, 1908).

Her studies were again put on hold due to her sister's illness and she accepted a position as preceptress at the Saginaw high school. Her job was to rescue the failing school without insulting the ineffectual principal who had failed to keep order or manage the school efficiently.

Shortly after moving to Saginaw her family's financial problems escalated and her father decided he would have to sell the family home to meet his debts. Freeman Palmer moved her entire family to Saginaw and paid the many expenses incurred by the move. Although she was asked two different times to take a teaching position at Wellesley College she declined so that she could continue caring for her invalid sister and her family.

In 1879 her sister died and by that time her family was once again financially stable. Her other sister was married and her brother was in college so when Wellesley once again contacted her she was, at last, ready to accept the challenge. She became the

head of the history department and by 1880 was appointed vice president but acting president of Wellesley (Palmer, 1908; Palmieri, 1995). George Palmer (1908) while recounting Freeman Palmer's time at Wellesley stated that "Yet perhaps it is not unfair to say that, while Mr. Durand was its founder, she in her brief term was its builder" (p. 93). Similarly, after her death, Wellesley's President Eliot claimed that "Her work at Wellesley was creation, not imitation; and it was work done in the face of doubts, criticisms, and prophecies of evil" (quoted by Palmer, 1908, p. 118).

In 1882, Freeman Palmer became the second president of Wellesley at the age of twenty-six and began her campaign to bring this newly founded "girls' school" up to the standards of a coeducational university like the University of Michigan where she had flourished. As stated before, she believed that women's colleges did not have the academic standards found in coeducational institutions and this was a disservice to women who could very well meet the higher academic standards required of men. According to Palmer (1908) she raised the entrance requirements requiring a knowledge of Greek and Latin, much like the standard requirements for men during that time. In addition, rigorous entrance examinations were required in English Literature and history. In order for young women to be able to pass these stringent entrance requirements she established fifteen preparatory schools throughout the country which were managed and taught by Wellesley College graduates (Palmer, 1908; Palmieri, 1995).

Additionally, she increased the respect and quality of faculty by organizing each subject into a department with a chairperson who reported directly to Freeman Palmer. She gradually increased the required credentials and teaching expertise of the faculty. Palmieri (1995) argued that "Freeman provided the academic women with precisely the

blend of freedom and responsibility necessary to convert their intellectualism into significant, productive work” (p. 30). Palmieri further stated “In the classroom Freeman allowed her faculty complete freedom, giving them *carte blanche* in matters of curriculum and pedagogy and supporting experimentation and innovation in both” (p. 30). Palmer was an excellent financial manager, had an instinct for people, and was courageous in her governing decision making (Hazard, 1925). Freeman Palmer’s far-seeing policies coupled with her charismatic personality created a Wellesley College that was far beyond the realm of female academy. She is generally given the credit for the excellence of a Wellesley education.

Freeman Palmer’s tenure as President lasted only six years and ended in 1887 when she married George Herbert Palmer, a professor of philosophy at Harvard. However, she continued to be a guiding force behind Wellesley from her position on the Board of Trustees. Palmieri (1995) claimed that she “hand-picked the next three presidents” (p. 37) as well as the policy decisions that moved Wellesley from a seminary for young women to a liberal arts college.

In 1892, the newly founded University of Chicago extended an offer to both Palmers. George was offered the head of the Philosophy department and Alice was offered both the Dean of Women position and a position as professor of history. According to George Palmer (1908) she refused to leave home or ask her husband to leave his career at Harvard. She was then urged to accept the Dean of Women position and only have to be in Chicago for twelve weeks a year. Her duties included supervision of “women’s lodging, food, conduct, and choice of studies” (Palmer, 1908, p. 234), and could select her assistant Dean who would supervise during Freeman Palmer’s absences.

She accepted this position and selected her friend and colleague, Marion Talbot, as her assistant Dean. It was necessary for Talbot to perform the duties of dean most of the year since Freeman Palmer was not on campus (Fitzpatrick, 1989). Freeman Palmer held this position just long enough to establish a place at this new university for women and then left it in the hands of Talbot.

Besides her work at Wellesley and the University of Chicago, Palmer spent the rest of her life serving her community, particularly in the area of education for females. She assisted in the formation of Radcliffe College, primarily by fundraising. In addition, she was president of the Woman's Education Association which endeavored to open all aspects of higher education to women. This group under her leadership was instrumental in the formation of the Wood's Hole marine station where scientists gathered to study the ocean and the fishing industry. Another important interest of Freeman Palmer's was funding for foreign female students. She worked tirelessly to ensure that these students had funding and even opened her home to those who needed a place to live while they attended college (Palmer, 1908).

Freeman Palmer did finally get that doctoral degree in Philosophy in 1882 from the University of Michigan as well as an honorary Doctor of Letters from Columbia University in 1887 and Doctor of Laws from Union University in 1896 (Palmer, 1908; Wellesley College Archives, Papers of Alice Freeman Palmer, file: General). Another important activity in Freeman Palmer's life was the ACA. She served as president of the organization from 1885 – 1887 and again in 1889-1890. In 1901 she served as the first General Secretary entrusted with “power to direct and supervise the policy” (Talbot and Rosenberg, 1931, p. 31). She also served on the membership and foreign fellowships

committees as an active member from the first meeting until her death in 1902 while on a trip to Europe with her husband. Below, in Table 5 is a chronological list of the offices she held in the ACA from its inception in 1881 until her death in 1902 according to Talbot (Talbot, M. papers, 1854-1948, Box 7, folder 5). At a memorial meeting held in her honor at the University of Chicago on February 23, 1903, several people spoke of her many accomplishments and contributions to higher education for women including her friend and colleague, Marion Talbot. Talbot emphasized Freeman Palmer's work in the ACA, particularly her insistence of the importance of physical activity for women students and her tireless work in acquiring fellowships for students in need of financial support (Talbot, M., 1854-1948, Memorial Meeting, February 23, 1903). J. Laurence Laughlin, 1850-1933, head of the University of Chicago Department of Economics and well known economist, declared the following:

You Wellesley women owe much to Alice Freeman. She believed in you; she saw in you the future. It was in your fulfillment of her ideals that she kept herself hopeful and enthusiastic to the end. She built on you, and you did not fail her (Talbot, M. , 1854-1948, Memorial Meeting, February 23, 1903, p. 10).



Table 5

*Chronological List of Positions and Dates Held by Freeman Palmer in ACA*

<b>Position</b>	<b>DATE</b>
Executive Committee	1882
Committee on Graduate Study	1882
Vice President	1884
President	1885-86
Committee on Fellowship	1889-95
Committee on Endowment of Colleges	1889
Committee on Admission of Colleges	1889-93
Committee on Corporate Membership	1896-1902
Committee on Collegiate Administration	1891-1902
ACA Representative on Advisory Council of World's Fair Congress of Representative Women	1892
Member of Council to Accredite Women for Advanced Work in Foreign Universities	1899-1900
Incorporator	1899
Committee on Finance and Publication	1899-1902
Committee on Paris Exhibit	1899-1900
Committee on Membership	1900-02
General Secretary	1900-02



Marion Talbot

Courtesy of the University of Chicago Archives

Marion Talbot was born in Switzerland on July 31, 1858 to Israel Tisdale Talbot and Emily Fairbanks Talbot. Her family lived in Boston and her father was Dean of the School of Medicine at Boston University (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931).

According to Talbot and Rosenberry (1931), Talbot's parents very much wanted their two daughters to have access to the best education possible. Dr. Talbot prepared his two daughters for college by having them tutored in Latin and Greek at the age of ten. Talbot began studying Latin and by thirteen was studying Greek by private tutor and attendance at the Chauncy Hall School which "reluctantly" admitted a few girls (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931, p. 4). They spent a year and a half in Europe so the two sisters could learn French and German and even then, Talbot could not pass the entrance examinations for Boston University.

Nevertheless, her father was able to arrange for her to enter the College of Liberal Arts at Boston University with the provision that she make up the entrance requirements while also completing her freshman year studies (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931). She graduated in 1880 at the age of twenty-two and went on to earn a Masters degree from Boston University in 1882.

She found she needed something to do with her education beyond the traditional role for women of housekeeping and her mother suggested getting together with her friends from the university to consider their options (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931). This suggestion resulted in the founding of the ACA and nourished several friendships which lasted her whole life.

One of those friends was Ellen Swallow Richards. Talbot studied under Richards and earned a B. S. from MIT in 1888. She became interested in home sanitation and co-

authored several books on the subject with Richards. Another friend and co-founder of the ACA was Alice Freeman Palmer who had just retired from the presidency of Wellesley College and with her assistance, Talbot began teaching in the domestic science department at Wellesley College. She taught germ theory and dietetics from 1890 – 1892.

During this time, she became active in the Massachusetts Society for the University Education of Women, serving as secretary and president. She also served on the Board of Visitors of Wellesley College and served one term as alumni trustee at Boston University (Talbot, 1936).

Talbot was building a full and satisfying professional career in Boston and at the same time plans were being made to build a new university in Chicago which was considered the wild, uncivilized frontier. According to Talbot (1936), William Raney Harper, the newly appointed president of the University of Chicago “scoured the academic world for great scholars who would dare exchange comfortable and safe positions for the hazards and excitements of a new undertaking” (p. 2).

Among his first choices were Alice Freeman Palmer and her husband, George. Freeman Palmer wrote to Talbot about Harper’s invitation and assured her that if she went to Chicago she would be able to choose the female professors and her first choice would be Talbot (correspondence from Freeman Palmer to Talbot, March 6, 1892, Talbot papers, Box 1, folder 1). After a trip to see the University of Chicago, Freeman Palmer wrote to Talbot in April, 1892 “Remember, if I come west you must come too---I mean it, my dear friend” (Talbot, 1936, p. 4). Talbot (1936) related the circumstances of her appointment to the university as follows:

Later on, in July, when the arrangement was made by which Mrs. Palmer would take an active share in the administration and be in residence at the University during twelve weeks each year, she wrote to me again, 'I made my going conditioned on yours. Dr. Harper says that he distinctly wants you and will try to get you to Chicago for the start.' When finally, in the late summer of 1892, the appointment came to be assistant professor of sanitary science and dean (of women) in the University Colleges, I had mixed feelings of interest and hesitation. (p. 4)

Her parents urged her to go to Chicago where they foresaw many extraordinary opportunities for their daughter as she helped build a brand new university and a growing city (Talbot, 1936). This exciting new university expected to, as laid out in the articles of incorporation, "provide, impart, and furnish opportunities for all departments of higher education to persons of both sexes on equal terms" (Talbot, 1936, pp. 13-14). As a result of their influence, she left for Chicago on September 19, 1892 with Freeman Palmer as her traveling companion. Among other friends, Florence Cushing, co-founder of the ACA, saw them off at the train station (Talbot, 1936).

Talbot began to build a career at the University of Chicago. In 1895 she became the dean of women and was promoted to associate professor of her own department in Household Sanitation. In 1905 she became a full professor. She was often consulted by college presidents looking for suitable women to hire as faculty and put forth her students as candidates (Talbot, M., 1854-1948, Brown University President W. H. P. Faunce to Talbot, February 14, 1900; University of Missouri President R. H. Jesse, to Talbot, February 19, 1900, box 2, folder 3; Talbot, M., 1854-1948, Washington University

Chancellor D. F. Houston to Talbot, March 5, 1912, box 2, folder 7). She corresponded with university leaders regarding the difficult issues that arose when women were admitted to their institutions including whether or not the sexes should be segregated which was the model at the University of Chicago with separate deans, programs and so forth (Talbot, M., 1854-1948, Cornell University president J. G. Schurman to Talbot, April 26, 1916, box 2, folder 8).

In the beginning, the University of Chicago housed female students and faculty in hotels and boarding houses. Talbot was responsible for the decision to build on-campus dormitories exclusively for women. She continuously fought for and supported her students until her retirement in 1925. She wrestled with such issues as the wisdom of allowing sororities for women students, co-educational classes, and financial issues, while overseeing the women's conduct, housing, food, academic programs, and any other aspect of the collegial lives of the women at the University of Chicago (Talbot, 1936).

During her years in Chicago, Talbot continued her involvement in the ACA serving as national president, 1895-1897 (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931). In addition to serving as president and secretary, she chaired several important committees including the committee charged with uniting with the Western Association of Collegiate alumnae (1897), Corporate Committee which maintained the standards for college and university admission to the ACA, Committee for College Endowment whose task was to strengthen women's educational institutions to ensure access for women to higher education, and in 1891 she was appointed to the Committee for Collegiate Administration (Mutschler, M. L., 1937). She wrote a history of the Chicago branch in 1917 and represented the ACA at many major events including the World's Fair in 1893. Talbot "was probably more

responsible than any other one person for formulating its (the ACA) policy” (Marion Talbot Papers, (1854-1948). Norton, A. P., *Journal of Home Economics*, (1925)).

In addition to her activities with the ACA in 1901 she formed and served as the first president of the Women’s Union on campus aimed at promoting the interests of women students, staff, and faculty (The Woman’s Union. (n.d.) Marion Talbot Papers, box 4, folder 7, University of Chicago Special Collections). She also called the first meeting of the Deans and Advisors of Women of the Middle West in 1902. She served on a permanent committee in that organization.

In 1924 Talbot was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws from her alma mater, Boston University (Talbot, M., 1854-1948, Office of the President of Boston University to Talbot, December 13, 1924, box 2, folder 9) and received a LL.D. from Tulane University in 1935 (Talbot, M. (1854-1948), Talbot to Hefferan, September 4, 1941, box 12, folder 5). She retired from the University of Chicago in 1925 with the title of professor emeritus (Talbot, M. (1854-1948), Talbot to Hefferan, September 4, 1941, box 12, folder 5). Talbot (1936) gave thirty-three years of her life to the University of Chicago and after retiring in 1925 she recounted the following story:

So it happened that on my retirement when a well-meaning but not very successful dean of women said, “I congratulate you – Now you can do what you want to do,” – I flared back, “That is what I have been doing all these years – if it had not seemed the most worthwhile thing I could do, I would have dropped instantly.” (p. 217)

She did not remain retired for long. From 1927 until 1932 she was the acting president of Constantinople Women’s College in Turkey where she was charged with

bringing order to a faltering program. She was instrumental in gaining admission to American universities for many of her students from that college (Talbot, M., 1854-1948. Box 3, folder 2).

She wrote several books on education for women and her educational discipline, household science. A partial list of her books includes:

- *Food as a Factor in Student Life: A Contribution to the Study of Student Diet* (1894, with Richards).
- *Moral and Religious Influences as Related to Environment of Student Life: Dormitory Life for College Women* (1909).
- *The Education of Women* (1910).
- *House Sanitation: A Manual for Housekeepers* (1912).
- *The Modern Household* (1912, with Breckinridge).
- *The Woman Citizen and the Home* (1914, with Evans).
- *The History of the American Association of University Women: 1881-1931* (1931).
- *More than Lore* (1936).

Many of her books are still being reproduced today.

Talbot left Turkey in 1932 and returned to her home in Chicago where she continued her work in education. With her help, Talbot students secured positions at universities and colleges across America. It is safe to say that her influence can be found in many American universities as her “girls” were strategically placed as faculty and administrators at newly founded universities and at established institutions as they began to open their doors to women.



In an audio recording another one Talbot's "girls," Louise Vihoff Molkup (n.d.) described Talbot as a "perfectionist" who "is and always will be a role model for the AAUW, on what they stand for, what they look for in the betterment of our country and our lives" (p. 8). In 1945, Talbot listed her hobby as "Education and opportunity for women" (Talbot, M. papers, 1854-1948, Talbot to Jonesboro AAUW secretary A. B. Hughes, April 5, 1945). Talbot continued to work for both access and quality of higher education for women until her death in 1948 at the age of ninety.

### **Summary**

This collection of biographical profiles provides a view of the lives of not only the 17 women who are the subjects of this study, but a collective biography (Davies, 2006; Davies, Flemmen, Gannon, Laws, & Watson, 2002) of women in the professions in higher education during the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in America. Their lives provide the answer to the first research question and lead us to understanding not only who they were, but how they managed to acquire education and professional positions and ultimately open the gates for women at institutions of higher learning.

The women who attended college between 1865 and 1890, according to Gordon (1990), are identified by historians as "the pioneer generation" (p. 5) of women in higher education. The next part of this chapter will look at what they had in common in their pursuit of education and a profession and how their actions contributed to society, particularly in the area of higher education for women in an attempt to answer the question:

**RQ 2: How were these women able to develop professional careers in higher**

**education given the social restraints of their time?****Family**

In nearly every woman's life the foundation of her success was a supportive family. In some cases the family support was financial and included the best preparation for higher education that could be found in a time when educational opportunities for girls and women were limited. Marion Talbot is a good example of this kind of support. Her family began planning her education before she was ten years old and hired tutors and used their social and professional influence to secure a place for her in a preparatory school (Talbot & Rosenberry, 1931). They even moved to Europe for eighteen months so she and her sister could learn to speak modern languages fluently in the hopes that this training would prepare them for college entrance examinations. Her father's position at the medical school at Boston University gave him some influence in the decision to accept her as a student even though she did not pass the entrance examinations.

One of the surprising findings of this study is that a number of the women were from lower socioeconomic families. The conventional wisdom argues that only girls from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were able to acquire an education, especially higher education (Gordon, 1990). This proved not to be true in this study. In fact, some of the women who eventually achieved great success in their professions such as Richards and Freeman Palmer actually financially supported their families both during their student years and afterward. Both Richards and Palmer had to work and save money for tuition while at the same time assisting their families with financial support.

Several of the subjects of this study would be considered "nontraditional" students in today's nomenclature. Non-traditional students are generally described as

adults aged twenty-five or older with adult responsibilities such as family, work, and financial commitments (Bowl, 2001, 2003; Ely, 1997). Richards was 26 years old when she could finally afford to go to college. Ellen Hayes had to postpone her entry into higher education by five years so she could earn money to pay for tuition. Stratton taught school and then spent ten years teaching newly freed slaves to read and write. She finally entered Oberlin College at the age of thirty-two. These women were forced to delay their entrance into higher education for the some of the same reasons many women today are forced to delay their education namely, lack of funding and family responsibilities (Bowl, 2001; Ely, 1997). Furthermore, in at least one case, that of Marston Walmsley, a career was interrupted by the need to financially assist family. Marston Walmsley had to leave her position as professor of Greek at Wellesley College to return home to assist her father in saving a failing business although she longed to return to Wellesley (Marston, M. O., 1870-1924, Marston to Walmsley, H. B. Walmsley, February 9, 1881).

Many of the families offered other forms of support including a family-based belief in the value of education for all children at a time when the popular belief was that girls needed little education beyond preparation for wife and motherhood (Palmieri, 1995). I found no evidence that any of the families of these women fought against their efforts to acquire a college education for any reason other than a lack of finances.

Other support took the form of moral support and assistance with clothing and other basic necessities. Letters revealed that mothers helped their daughters in many little ways such as re-making dresses and coats or adding a piece of home-made lace to a blouse. Marston Walmsley's weekly letters to her mother often included requests for a new coat or money for new dresses (Marston, M. O. 1870-1924, Marston to mother).

Freeman Palmer wrote the following to her mother while she was at the University of Michigan:

I have received all the letters you mention but still have only \$16.00. Never mind, I will pay it all back sometime. I ought to settle my account here as soon as possible. If papa can send me money for the bills I shall be very glad. If you can help me through this year I will try as best I may to take up the paddle and push my own canoe afterwards. (as quoted by Palmer, 1908, pp. 60-61)

These women were able to meet the difficult challenges of women in the professions, in part, because they knew their families believed in their choices and their ability to achieve their goals.

### **Progressive Era, 1890-1920**

As I mentioned before, it seems as though these women were born at just the right time in American society to be able to pursue their dreams. By the middle of the nineteenth century, most Americans had accepted co-educational primary and even secondary schools (Gordon, 1990). The families of the subjects of this study may not have been as supportive of their educational goals if it had been just a few years earlier. However, it became little easier for a woman to enter academia because of the expansion of seminaries and normal schools, which proliferated in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as discussed in chapter two.

Opportunities for women in higher education began to improve in the mid-1800s due to three important developments, which occurred at about the same time. In 1862, the Morrill Act was passed which gave each state 30,000 acres of federal land for each member of Congress representing that state. The money from the sale of this land was to

be used to establish institutions of higher learning focused on agriculture and other skilled professions. Although the law did not specifically say that women must be admitted, it did not exclude them; and this new form of access allowed women to slip in the doors of these state institutions (Solomon, 1985). The first state institutions to admit women are listed chronologically in Table 6 below.

Table 6

*State Institutions and Dates Women Students Were Admitted.*

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Date Women Admitted</b>
University of Iowa	1855
University of Wisconsin	1867
Indiana University	1869
University of Kansas	1869
University of Minnesota	1869
University of California	1870
University of Michigan	1870
University of Missouri	1870

*Note.* Data from (Solomon, 1985, p. 53)

Rudolph (1962) pointed out that some of the first institutions to admit women were located in the western states where the agricultural lifestyle, in some ways, put the

sexes on an equal footing since both participated in the work on the farm. When land grant colleges opened it seemed logical (and cost effective) for men and women to attend the same school. These land grant institutions were some of the first coeducational colleges and universities in America. Coeducation was the fastest growing form of higher education during the progressive era (Gordon, 1990). However, some of these institutions admitted women but the classes and social activities were segregated. For instance, at the University of Chicago, President William Raney Harper, 1856-1906, instituted a policy of segregated instruction during his time as president from 1891 until his death in 1906 (Gordon, 1990).

The second major opportunity in higher education for women came in the form of three colleges established specifically for women. Vassar College, located in Poughkeepsie, New York opened its doors in 1861 with the express goal of becoming a college on equal par with Harvard and Yale (<http://www.vassar.edu/about/vassar/history.html>, 2013). Sophia Smith, 1796-1870, used her inheritance to found Smith College which opened in 1875 in Northampton, Massachusetts with the stated goal of offering women an education equal to that received by men (<http://www.smith.edu/about-smith/smith-tradition>, 2013). Wellesley College, founded by Pauline and Henry Fowle Durant, opened in 1875 in Wellesley, Massachusetts. From the very beginning Wellesley aimed to educate women to affect social change with the motto *Non Ministraris Ministrare* which translates to “Not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (<http://wellesley.edu/about/missionandvalues>, 2013).

During this period in American history, women were increasingly becoming a presence on college and university campuses. In 1870, 11,000 women were enrolled in

higher education which was 21% of total enrollment. By 1880, when the subjects of this study were finishing their undergraduate degrees, 40,000 women were enrolled raising the percentage of female students to 33.4% (Gordon, 1990).

In addition to the two major developments in women's education discussed above, the suffragette movement was gaining ground and provided a third major development that contributed to the opening of the gates of higher education for women. In 1848, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized a convention in Seneca Falls, New York and from this meeting came a list of demands including suffrage and admission for women to male colleges and universities (Solomon, 1985). It is hard to know if the movement for the vote led to more opportunities for women in higher education or whether more women in higher education led to more interest in acquiring the vote and equal rights for women. According to Gordon (1990) many suffragist organizations as well as the ACA rallied behind Talbot's opposition to segregation of the sexes at the University of Chicago, which is an example of how closely linked the two movements were.

### **Unequal and Separate or Unequal and Coeducational**

As America moved toward the progressive era, education for women was the focus of much debate. One part of the discussion focused on whether or not women and men should be educated the same way; and probably even more controversial whether they should be educated together in the same classroom. As discussed in chapter two, the widely held belief that women and men lived lives in "separate spheres" would naturally lead to the belief that the educational needs and goals would be different for each sex. In addition, the theory espoused by Clarke (1873), Hall (1904), and other scientists and

physicians that higher education was physically and mentally detrimental to women supported the argument for separate higher education for the sexes.

However, some of the subjects in this study were not satisfied with the content and quality of the female colleges and seminaries that were available. Gordon stated that women like Freeman Palmer, women's rights activists Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815-1902, and Martha Carey Thomas, 1857-1935, believed that "coeducational schools represented social freedom and intellectual excitement, as opposed to the new women's colleges, which were regarded as little better than seminaries" (p. 24). For example, Freeman Palmer's decision to attend the newly coeducational University of Michigan is described by George Palmer (1908) in the passage below:

In deciding on a college the range was small. Wellesley, Smith, and Bryn Mawr were not yet in existence. Mount Holyoke was still a "Female Seminary," and Elmira hardly more, though legally a college. To this latter she might naturally have gone, as the college for girls nearest at hand. But she had been reading college catalogues, and knew that Elmira standards were low. To Vassar, which had just been founded, she seems to have inclined for a moment. But was it a true college, or merely another Elmira? A boy in her class who was preparing for Amherst hinted that these girls' colleges were a contrivance for enabling women to pretend that they had the same education as men. She had suspected as much herself, and being determined to get the best, had already begun to turn toward coeducation. But coeducational colleges were at that time few. Michigan was the strongest of them, and had opened its doors to women only two years before. That, then, distant though it was, she chose. (p. 43)



Still, coeducation in its early years was not completely coeducational. Some institutions admitted women but had separate academic pathways for men and women. Others allowed men and women in the same classrooms but segregated them socially so women had to form their own clubs and organizations. Still others allowed women to attend but gave them degrees that were less prestigious than the degrees earned by men. Each institution was different from the others so it is beneficial to look at each one separately, beginning with Freeman Palmer's choice: The University of Michigan.

### **The University of Michigan**

The University of Michigan was a state supported university and along with the universities in a few other western states, one of the first state universities to open its doors to women. In the first class with women students in 1870, there was one woman student to 429 men students (Rudolph, 1962). Madelon Stockwell, 1845-1924, the daughter of an Albion College professor, was the first woman admitted to the University of Michigan (Bordin, 1993).

In 1872, when Freeman Palmer entered the University of Michigan, she was one of eleven women in a class of 75 members (Bordin, 1993). As Palmer (1908) stated "In those days women's education was an anxious experiment" (p. 50) and their academic progress as well as their conduct were carefully monitored. Although Freeman Palmer entered the University of Michigan on a six week probationary trial with much work to catch up, she soon became a leader academically and socially according to Palmer. Freeman Palmer was joined by two other subjects in this study: Lucy C. Andrews and Mary O. Marston (Walmsley). The three of them became good friends and shared housing while living and studying in Ann Arbor.

The University of Michigan began as an academy in Detroit in 1817 and was the oldest and largest university outside of the northeast (Bordin, 1993). In 1872, the University of Michigan had three colleges: literature and science; medicine; and law and was the largest university in America (Bordin, 1993). By the 1870s, when Freeman Palmer, Andrews, and Marston Walmsley were undergraduates, university president James B. Angell, 1829-1916, was a leader and spokesperson for the movement to establish (and legitimize) state universities and colleges (Rudolph, 1962). He argued that a democracy required educated citizens and not just an educated aristocracy; and the Christian belief in equality for all men also demanded access to higher education for all citizens. The state supported university would make that possible by offering access to affordable higher education (Rudolph, 1962). Angell supported the idea of coeducation and opposed Clarke's assertion that higher education was detrimental to women's health (Bordin, 1993).

At Michigan, female students studied alongside their male counterparts and were accepted in student organizations (Bordin, 1993). Palmer (1908) stated that Freeman Palmer felt that it was wholesome and natural for men and women to study together and learn how to have relationships since that is how they would spend their lives. She thought that contact with the opposite sex gave women a realistic view of men and overcame "giddiness and sentimentality" (p. 52).

The growing popularity of coeducation at the University of Michigan caused some problems for the Board of Trustees. The number of women undergraduates on American college campuses was nearing the fifty percent mark and this worried administrators at many institutions of higher learning including the University of

Wisconsin, Boston University and Oberlin College (Solomon, 1985). What began in 1870 at the University of Michigan with one woman student quickly grew and in 1898 there were 588 women and 745 male students enrolled and over fifty percent of undergraduate degrees were awarded to women (Rudolph, 1962). Between 1902 and 1915, the University of Michigan assumed a quota system for female admissions that would limit the number of women who were accepted as undergraduate students (Gordon, 1990).

### **The University of Wisconsin**

Dean and Frisby completed their undergraduate work at the University of Wisconsin which was founded in 1848 and became one of the first land grant universities. In 1863 the first women were admitted to the university normal school. During the Civil War, 1861-1865, women were allowed to take classes outside the normal school since male enrollment was down due to the war. However, they were not allowed to sit until all the male students had taken a seat (Solomon, 1985). Just two years later, in 1867, due to then President Paul Chadbourne's opposition to coeducation, the normal school was closed and replaced by a separate female college. In a Regents Report from 1871, the female faculty members of the female college were referred to as "lady teachers" (quoted by Lundberg, 1908). Lundberg (1908) stated that women could attend lectures but could not attend recitations with men. Their recitations and ceremonies were separate. In fact, several women earned Ph.D.s in 1869 but the degree was not conferred until 1874 when the university finally became truly coeducational (Lundberg, 1908). President John A. Bascom closed Female College and accepted women with coeducational status in 1874 (McGuigan, 1970; University of

Wisconsin Timeline). This was just in time for Frisby who graduated in 1878 and Dean who graduated in 1880.

### **Oberlin College**

Anna Morgan graduated from Oberlin College in 1866, followed by Ellen Hayes and Margaret Stratton in 1878. Oberlin College was founded in Ohio in 1833 by two Presbyterian ministers named John Jay Shipherd, and Phylo P. Stewart. Oberlin College was the first institution of higher education to regularly admit women and African American students. Oberlin had a female department with administrators who were trained by Mary Lyon (see chapter two discussion of seminaries) among others (Solomon, 1985). The first four full time women students were admitted in 1837 and Mary Jane Patterson, the first African American woman to receive a college degree in the United States, graduated from Oberlin College in 1862 (Lasser, 1998). The first president of Oberlin College, Asa Mahan, 1799-1889, insisted that women and men receive the exact same diplomas (Oberlin College Presidents, 1835-present) which is remarkable in that some other institutions allowed women to take classes but did not award degrees to them. Still others had separate degree titles and commencement programs for the sexes.

### **Boston University**

Marion Talbot attended Boston University as an undergraduate and Maria Dean and Almah Frisby attended the Boston University School of Medicine where Talbot's father, Israel T. Talbot was Dean. Dean Talbot was the founder of the New England Female Medical College which merged with Boston University. Boston University began as Methodist Church sponsored Newbury Biblical Institute in Vermont in 1839 and

then moved to Boston where the three founders, Lee Claflin, 1791-1871, Jacob Sleeper, 1802-1889, and Isaac Rich, 1801-1872, obtained a charter from the state and opened as Boston University in 1869. Kydd (2002) stated that “The university had no restrictions according to race, gender, or religion-except that the theology school was permitted to consider ‘religious opinions’” (p. 7).

Indeed, women were welcome in every department of Boston University and the first president, William Fairfield Warren, 1833-1929, even stated that women were welcome as faculty as well as students (Solomon, 1985). Thus, Boston University was the first institution of higher education to admit women in Massachusetts. Seeing the need for college preparatory schools for girls, President Warren lobbied for such a school in Boston. As a result of his efforts, as well as the efforts of others, the Girls’ Latin School opened in 1878 (Solomon, 1985).

### **Cornell University**

Mary Ladd graduated from Cornell University in 1875 only two years after Emma Sheffield Eastman, the first female to graduate from that university (The Cornell Women’s Handbook). Cornell University was a land grant institution founded by the state of New York in 1865 as a “People’s College” (Solomon, 1985, p. 51) with the aim of educating the middle and lower classes. The two founders of this university, Ezra Cornell and Andrew D. White, were in favor of higher education for women and insisted that this new university would be open to all, regardless of sex or race. In 1862, White, Cornell University’s first president, wrote that

to admit women and colored persons into a pretty college would do good to the individuals concerned; but to admit them to a great university would be a blessing

to the whole colored race and the whole female sex-for the weaker colleges would finally be compelled to adopt the system. (quoted by Whalen, 2001, p. 3)

As a result of the founders' convictions, Cornell University became the first coeducational major institution of higher learning in the Eastern United States, but not without opposition. President White stated that "no flippant and worthless boarding school misses" would be admitted (Solomon, 1985, p. 52) in an effort to reassure those who were afraid that admitting women would lower the standards of Cornell University. This university was the first to establish a financial aid system specifically for women (The Cornell Women's Handbook). A women's dormitory was financed by Henry Sage in exchange for the promise that "Cornell University is pledged to provide and forever maintain facilities for the education of women as broadly as men" (cornerstone of Sage College quoted in The Cornell Women's Handbook).

However, not everyone, including some of the faculty, was in favor of the admission of women. Gordon (1990) stated that women were greeted with "hostility, ridicule, and neglect" (p. 22). Women were restricted in ways that male students were not. For instance, they had a curfew and answered to a matron who acted as a chaperone for the women. Despite the restrictions, women developed their own sports, clubs, and other organizations on campus (The Cornell Women's Handbook). The first Ph. D. earned by a woman at Cornell University was granted in 1880 to May Preston (History of graduate study at Cornell, 2011).

### **After Graduation**

The seventeen women in this study are, of course, products of their educations. Their early education ranged from home schooling to seminary and included tutors,

European travel for education as in the case of Talbot, local public schools, and self education aimed at meeting the admissions requirements of colleges and universities. As Gordon (1997) pointed out, their choice of a coeducational or women's college greatly affected their college experiences. Of the seventeen, eleven of them attended coeducational institutions as undergraduates. In addition, Richards graduated from Vassar College but went on to graduate school at MIT, thereby creating coeducation at that university.

Many of these women accepted teaching positions at women's colleges after graduation, probably because that was where the jobs were for women. However, they brought their belief in coeducation with them to Wellesley, Smith, Vassar, and the newly founded University of Chicago, as well as the other institutions where they taught. They continued to work from within to gain access to quality education for women. In particular, Freeman Palmer who strongly believed in the superiority of coeducational institutions (Palmer, 1908), was determined to raise the standards of Wellesley College to meet those of the finer men's universities when she became president of Wellesley College. As part of her strategy, she brought several women from the University of Michigan to the faculty at Wellesley. She and Talbot brought the same belief in coeducation to the University of Chicago as illustrated by Talbot (1936) in the following passage: "Mrs. Palmer and I agreed that we would not favor having the women separated from the men in the awarding of degrees and consequently would not urge that the dean of women should present the women for the degrees" (p. 159).

The subjects of this study also advocated for quality education for women at coeducational institutions where they were teaching. During her years at the University

of Chicago, Talbot continually argued against gender segregation and for coeducation with equal access for women. For example, after World War I, a fund was established to pay the tuition of students who had served in the war. Since the information given to the public about this fund only mentioned men, Talbot decided to challenge the assumption that women did not serve in the war. Talbot (1936) reported the following:

I straightaway wrote to the Dean in charge of the fund, asking if women would be eligible. He replied in his characteristically blunt way, "No," with the idea "how" absurd" permeating the seeming ultimatum. I then inquired directly of the War and Navy departments as to whether women had served in the war in the Army or Navy, and was officially informed that they had served in both. Before these replies came, I kept the question open by corresponding with the Dean and other authorities, feeling perhaps unduly confident that I was showing more moderation in my phrases than was my correspondent. The matter was closed to my satisfaction by an official administrative ruling that there would be no distinction of sex. (pp. 214-215)

In this instance, and many others, these women reached out beyond the walls of academia to extend and protect the rights of women.

At MIT, Richards continued to push for access for women after breaking the gender barrier at the school as both student and faculty member as illustrated by her drive to establish a research laboratory for women. Frisby, as Trustee of the University of Wisconsin, advocated for more access and increased content for women students. Others were working in preparatory schools for girls and establishing better math and science programs so that their students would be ready for higher education.



Having attended coeducational institutions of higher education at a time when coeducation was an experiment with many opponents, these women were possibly hyper-aware of the importance of avoiding the appearance of either misconduct or failure by themselves and their students. For example, Talbot monitored her students' behavior and progress carefully at the University of Chicago as did Freeman Palmer at Wellesley College. They were very much aware that they were the architects of a major advance in education for women and they had to tread carefully to ensure success of their efforts to open the doors of higher education for women. What may appear to have been excessive control may actually have been one of the more important strategies in their campaign for access.

### **Careful Control of Women in Higher Education**

Even though the women in this study benefitted from changes to society brought by the progressive era, they were still limited by society's beliefs regarding women and their role in their homes and communities. There was a widely held belief that higher education would be detrimental to a female's health and mental well-being. In 1873, Harvard University professor, Dr. Edward Clarke, 1820-1877, published a book titled *Sex in Education, or a Fair Chance for the Girls* (1873) which claimed that higher education would not only damage women's health but would also limit their ability to reproduce (Palmieri, 1995; Park, 1881). He argued that such a great strain on the mind would damage the development of the female body since it was not able to efficiently "do two things at once" (Clarke, 1873, p. 40). Clarke's theory became a popular argument against admitting women to higher education degree programs (Conable, 1977; Palmieri, 1995).

In 1904, Dr. G. Stanley Hall (1844-1924) published a two-volume treatise titled *Adolescence* in which he argued that higher education, among other things, was detrimental to women's health and caused irregular menstrual cycles. He was a proponent of the "separate spheres" theory and argued that beginning in high school boys and girls should follow separate and different education paths to prepare them for separate and different roles in life. Since Dr. Hall was the president of Clark University, first president of the American Psychological Association, and founder of the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, his opinions were taken seriously by many parents and educators.

As a result, both the universities and the students were very conscious of the need to pay careful attention to public opinion and make this experiment successful (Palmieri, 1997). Clifford (1989) stated "Such pioneers in the education of women were animated by the need to protect women's reputations in an arena where they were not welcomed" (p. 13). Talbot (1936) explained her efforts to control parties with alcohol involving University of Chicago women students in the early years.

The University was in the limelight because of its adventurous and radical plans; and there were plenty of critics ready to ridicule, if not to condemn ruthlessly, its various activities. Those who believed that the University had a big contribution to make, toward fine scholarship had to be constantly on their guard lest some slight misstep might harm the whole undertaking. It was very remarkable how clearly the women of the University understood this and how loyally and intelligently they cooperated in every measure that was undertaken to strengthen their position as important factors in the success of the enterprise. (pp. 70-71)

The behavior of female students was circumscribed and carefully monitored so that there would be no public outcry against the admission of women to these institutions. Female students were expected to dress and behave professionally whenever in public and such standards for women continued on American campuses well into the mid-twentieth century (Mulvihill, 1994). For example, Talbot (1936) told a story about seeing the daughter of university President Harper walking outside “grotesquely garbed and carrying a market basket” (p. 161). Talbot told her to go home and “attire herself properly for public gaze” (p. 161). This young lady was undergoing initiation into a club and Talbot quickly set the club leadership straight regarding the proper conduct of women on campus and pointed out that “we could not afford to tolerate conduct which reflected no credit on this group in the eyes of the public” (p. 162).

This desire for close monitoring of the academic and social lives of female students led to the creation of the position of dean of women first put in place at the University of Chicago when Freeman Palmer accepted that appointment. Freeman Palmer’s appointment included both the deanship and a teaching position which quickly became the norm as the idea of a dean of women took hold in institutions of higher learning (Mulvihill, 2011). Often the dean of women was also in charge of the athletic facilities and programs (Mulvihill, 2002).

In addition to conduct and academic progress, female students’ health was carefully monitored and healthy diet and suitable exercise was incorporated into the other requirements for continued enrollment. Both the administration of the universities and the students were very conscious of the tenuous position they were in as the first women to

enter higher education were watched and studied to see if, indeed, education would destroy their health.

Even though Clarke (1883) and others warned that strenuous physical exercise would be detrimental to women's health (Park, 1991), physical education had been an integral part of the curriculum in several seminaries for girls as early as the mid-1800s. Female students "took daily walks, participated in calisthenics, and performed strenuous domestic work" (Mulvihill, 2002, p.185). It is likely that many of the subjects of this study had experienced physical education in their early schooling. In fact, Mulvihill (2002) stated that "As early as 1885, a physical education curriculum was present in all women's colleges in the East, and 'sports for women' were organized in many colleges and universities in the Midwest" (p. 185).

Possibly in reaction to the belief that higher education was too stressful for women, largely created by Clarke and other scientists (Park, 1991), several of the subjects of this study were adamant in their belief that students must strive for "well balanced bodies and well balanced minds (Talbot Papers, Box 1, folder 10, University of Chicago Special Collections). For instance, Morgan's years of work developing the *bellecycle* illustrated her conviction that physical exercise is necessary for good health and she argued that a person must relieve the stress on the intellect by engaging in physical exercise (Morgan, 1897). Likewise, during her years as president of Wellesley College, Freeman Palmer insisted that physical exercise and attention to diet were necessary for the success of her students (Record of a Meeting, 1903).

According to Louise V. Molkup, (n.d.) one of Marion Talbot's students who became a leader in the Chicago branch of the AAUW, Talbot lived by two mottoes:

“Know thyself,” and “Healthy mind in a healthy body” (Marion Talbot Biographical file 2, p. 5). She advocated for athletic programs for women as well as medical care on campus. It is likely that these women not only believed that a good mind required a healthy body but that they were conscious of the threat that Clarke and others made to access to higher education for women. In fact, the threat was so strong that the first area of interest adopted by the ACA was physical education which resulted in a study and published findings denying that education was detrimental to the health of women (Talbot, Speech to the New York Branch of the ACA. Marion Talbot papers, 1854-1948, n.d., University of Chicago Special Collections).

All of this interest and research in physical activity as a necessity for developing a healthy balance between body and mind led to the development of physical education programs for women. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, most institutions had established these programs with directors of education for women which resulted in sports programs for women (Mulvihill, 2011). Clifford (1989) pointed out that women hired to oversee gymnasiums and women’s physical education programs were some of the first women hired in institutions of higher education.

### **Movement into Management Positions**

By accepting management positions these women were able to advance opportunities for the higher education of women. Palmer, at age 26, accepted the position of second president of Wellesley College with the intention of moving that institution from a seminary/finishing school into a full-fledged university for women with stringent standards and an excellent reputation that would soon compete with the best of the traditional men’s institutions. She hired several of her friends from the University of

Michigan and established a power base that allowed her to move Wellesley College forward (Palmieri, 1995). Similarly, she and Talbot accepted positions at the newly founded University of Chicago and set about creating space and legitimacy for female students.

Stratton specifically stated that she accepted the position of the first dean of women at Colorado University so she could open the doors for the young women who would follow her. Regarding her acceptance of the appointment as Dean, she said “Only an entering wedge, for the work of some younger woman” (Mary Patterson Manly, Oberlin College, record group: 28/2 alumni, folder: Stratton, Margaret Elizabeth, box 1002). Most of these women seemed to understand that their actions would have a lasting effect on higher education for women. They seemed to be able to look far ahead to a future where women would be given full access to higher education and the academy.

Several of them moved into policy making positions where their influence would have a lasting impact. Frisby served on the University of Wisconsin Board Of Regents from 1901-1906 and Marston Walmsley served at the same university on the Board of Visitors from 1895-1899. Richards and Cushing served on the Vassar College Board of Trustees. Freeman Palmer served on the Wellesley College Board of Trustees where her experience as “professor, president, and trustee” carried enormous weight (Hazard, 1925, p. 191).

Not only did they move into management in the universities, colleges, preparatory schools, and seminaries, but they also accepted positions of management within professional and social organizations where their leadership continued to affect change in

society and specifically in education for girls and women. In fact, they often founded organizations to support their activities in the area of women's education. In short, if they saw a need, they used the power they gained from their professional lives to address that need.

In their capacity as physicians, Dean and Frisby attempted to address some of the problems they saw in their communities. Frisby, as special agent to the governor, championed the cause of mental patients living in state supported institutions. When Frisby held the position of Regent at the University of Wisconsin she lobbied for and got a department of domestic science and economy funded in 1903 (progress of the University, January, 1903).

Dean, like Frisby, focused her medical practice on the needs of women, children, and institutionalized patients. Also like Frisby, Dean took advantage of her position as chairman of the Helena Board of Health to address the needs of mental patients (Helena Independent, 1915). She also became interested in working women and helped found a local Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in 1914 (Forsen, 1978; Phillips, 1962). While president of the Helena, Montana branch of the ACA, she led that branch and the Missoula branch in a campaign to improve the care of institutionalized epileptic patients (The Journal of Collegiate Alumnae, 1914, p. 44).

### **Women's Organizations**

The subjects of this study did not only wield power and influence in their professions, they also utilized women's organizations, both professional and social, to aid in improving opportunities for access to higher education and opportunities for entry into professional positions for women. The most obvious example of this is the ACA itself.

This organization grew into a respected voice for women in the area of education and employment in the field of higher education. It was modeled after other women's clubs and organizations that had been popular outlets for women since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Blair, 1989; Scott, 1993). According to Blair (1989) these clubs mostly fell into thirteen categories:

- Benevolence.
- Culture.
- Sororities.
- Peace.
- Race.
- Patriotic.
- Religion and missionary.
- Suffrage.
- Temperance.
- Work.
- Youth and scouts.
- Politics.
- Miscellaneous.

It is interesting to note that she did not include education as one of the categories although the AAUW is the subject of several of her listed sources.

Volunteering through the auspices of these organizations was an acceptable way for women to be involved in social issues and have a voice in public policy without



stepping outside of the feminine sphere. Women learned many new skills while managing these clubs and organizations including how to conduct business, and business meetings, speak in public, maintain records, and manage money (Blair, 1989; McGerr, 2003; Scott, 1993). Those skills and the contacts they made also prepared them for the political arena (Blair, 1989; Heller, 1984). Scott (1993) argued that women developed a singularly female “style of professionalism” (p. 3) through their experiences within the organization that carried over when they actually entered a profession. Women’s organizations had an enormous effect on communities as they used their energy, funds, and collective power to improve living conditions for those in need. They worked to improve numerous situations from the plight of orphans to schools, public parks, water supplies, community health issues, and almost any problem in society. In fact, the Bryn Mawr summer school for workers movement was a direct result of the social justice movement created by women’s organizations (Heller, 1984).

During the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century women’s organizations multiplied so fast that according to Scott (1993) it was impossible to keep count of them. She argued that women’s organizations during that time comprised a social movement that wielded enormous power in American society by redefining and expanding the role of women into the public arena. Their work essentially reshaped American society and organizations we now take for granted such as health departments, public libraries, health clinics, and kindergartens are direct results of their work within the “prevailing social norms” (Scott, 1993, p. 180) to change those norms.

Many of these organizations began as religious organizations locally and some of them grew into national and international organizations. The Young Women’s Christian

Association (YWCA) was a focal point for the advancement of women's educational opportunities, particularly for working women without regard for race or ethnic background (Frederickson, 1984). From the education programs for working women the YWCA began lobbying for better and safer working conditions and higher wages for women working in the factories which led to women's presence in the labor movement. Many of the subjects of this study worked with and for the establishment of local YWCAs. For instance, Dean spearheaded the drive for a YWCA in Helena, Montana with the support of women's clubs in that city.

Scott (1993) pointed out that women's clubs were the driving force in establishing institutions of higher learning for women including Pembroke and Radcliffe. They also lobbied state legislators and college and university administrators for access for women in higher education. The subjects of this study participated in women's organizations as a "within the system" strategy for improving the opportunities for women in higher education.

Gordon (1990) offered a clear example of the political pressure club women could put on leaders of institutions of higher education. Between 1900 and 1902, a war raged at the University of Chicago over whether or not the sexes should be segregated socially and educationally in the classroom. Talbot, aware of the historical inequality of segregation opposed it, arguing for coeducation. When President Harper and the Board of Trustees considered segregation between the sexes, they were flooded with angry letters from women's organizations. A letter from Mineola Graham, Sexton, wife of a judge proclaimed:

Thousands of club women all over the United States are watching with grave

anxiety for the decision of the University of Chicago upon co-education. Women have worked so hard and so long for the privilege they now enjoy of securing a college education, and so many women are looking forward to entering your University that the possibility of being excluded in the future means far more to womanhood than you perhaps realize. (as quoted by Gordon, 1990, p. 116)

### **Working within the System**

Before beginning the research for this study, I assumed these women would all be sign wielding suffragettes leading the ranks of their sisters into battle on the streets of America. I soon realized that, in fact, most of them exhibited little interest in that particular form of activism. Instead, they worked within the system to open the gates of higher education to their sisters. Clements (1977) argued that the ACA's strategy was to "create a means of mixing women and academe without exploding the traditions of either" (p. 8). They utilized familial and social contacts that had influence at all levels of society, including the White House. At least one of them, Blake Pingree often spoke against women's suffrage (Leonard, 1914). The lone exception to this conservative stance was Ellen Hayes who became an outspoken leader of the Socialist Party and what might be called a political radical.

Dr. Maria Dean's political activities in Montana illustrate how successful working within the system was for these women. She was a prominent member of the Montana Equal Suffrage Association and the National American Women's Suffrage Association and she is given much of the credit for the successful 1914 campaign for women's right to vote in Montana.

However, she and the other leading women in the Montana campaign for the vote for women took the unusual and risky path to political power by mounting a campaign to elect the first woman to Congress (which could be viewed as either conservative or radical). She put her considerable skills to use by serving on Jeannette Rankin's campaign finance committee (Forssen, 1978).

Another important example of strategic use of women's organizations was Richard's campaign to build a laboratory for women at MIT. In the end, the laboratory was financed by women's organizations, particularly, The New England Women's Association of which she was a member and leader.

It is interesting to review an example of exactly how one woman, Marion Talbot, worked within the system of the University of Chicago to create change. In 1924, she and the only other two female professors wrote a letter to the Board of Trustees requesting that a woman be added to the Board. They began by citing the founding charter that stated "To provide, impart, and furnish opportunities for all departments of higher education to persons of both sexes on equal terms" (Talbot, 1936 p. 137). In their letter they claimed that this provision could not be fulfilled without a woman Trustee. Next, they cited statistics proving that women were not treated equally in the granting of fellowships, employment, promotion, salary, and recognition. Further, they listed all the ways women were excluded from important public events on campus including speaking at convocations, receiving honorary degrees, giving university lectures and homecoming presentations, appointments on important faculty committees, representation at social functions, access to the faculty Quadrangle Club, and participation in planning for future

university development. The next step was a list of demands (although they used the word “urge” rather than demand) which included the following:

1. Appointment of a woman Trustee.
2. Appointment to the Faculties several women of distinction and power in scholarship, teaching ability, or administrative skill.
3. Granting of greater encouragement to young women scholars of promise.
4. Larger recognition of women in semi-academic ways.
5. Better facilities for agreeable social life.
6. Further opportunity to make known the needs of women Faculty members and students which either exist today or will be felt in the near future (Talbot, 1936, p. 139).

As a result of this daring letter, a special committee was formed to investigate the women and the validity of their allegations, with the threat that they would be fired if the allegations were not true. The special committee found the allegations to be true and several women, including Talbot’s protégé, Sophonisba Breckenridge, were promoted to professor along with other concessions; but the Board refused to appoint a woman Trustee.

This “within the system” approach to activism was apparent in the early years of the ACA. When the members decided to take on an issue, they used a strategy that included research, publication, public presentations, and employment of a well-developed network of women who could influence policymaking and successfully raise the funding needed for the campaign. A good example of ACA research as activism is the large study they conducted on women’s wages. Another example is the study of female

students' health which was intended to counteract the belief that higher education was detrimental to women's health and reproduction. These studies, using scientific research methods were instrumental in opening the doors of colleges and universities to women.

### **Networking**

Throughout the previous discussions I have referred to the network employed by the subjects of this study. They built a strong and widespread network of women within the world of higher education that allowed them to consolidate their individual power and increase the presence of women in higher education. The network was made up of college classmates, professional colleagues, former students, students, their professors, administrators, club members, social and familial connections, and in the case of Marion Talbot, sympathetic parents and other family members. Talbot used this network to place one of her students at the Bedford Hills Reformatory where she created psychological testing programs that allowed better placement of prisoners (Rosenberg, 1982).

Through this network, they were able to place their colleagues in administrative positions as they were opened to women; place their graduating students in faculty positions; apply pressure to administrators and federal, state, and local lawmakers; and expand the opportunities for women in higher education. For example, Katherine Lee Bates, author of the song, *America the Beautiful*, and Wellesley College graduate and faculty member, wrote to Talbot for her opinion on a Miss Jordan of Smith College as a candidate for a faculty position at the University of California. She said that Jordan had been at "Smith as long as a woman ought to work in any one college, and has the name of being a true scholar, as well as an ingenious and inspiring teacher" (Talbot, M. (1854-1948), K. L. Bates to Talbot, M., n.d., box 1, folder 10). The Miss Jordan referred to in

Bates' letter is probably Mary Augusta Jordan, a member of the English department at Smith College from 1884–1921, based on correspondence from Bates to Jordan found in the Smith College archives (Jordan, M. A. Papers, 1885-1931, K. L. Bates to Jordan, October 27, 1895; March 1, 1914). She added that she wanted the University of California position to “be secured by a woman who would hold it creditably and advance the respect for women’s work there” (Talbot, M. (1854-1948), K. L. Bates to Talbot, M, n.d., Box 1, folder 10).

This network was responsible for many fund-raising successes such as Richard’s women’s laboratory at MIT. Another example is the financial support of the Vineyard School for Women Workers where Ellen Hayes raised the necessary funding with a letter campaign to her friends (Gordon, 1931).

Talbot’s continued work with the ACA and later AAUW is an example of networking within that organization. According to the Milwaukee branch minutes, Talbot gave a presentation on the history of the ACA. Frisby, as noted earlier was a member of that branch. Another example of networking within the ACA is found in a letter from Cushing to Talbot written on August 19, 1892. Cushing was expressing her concerns about the ACA admission requirements for institutions. She was particularly concerned about the University of Minnesota which did not require Latin (Talbot, M. papers (1854-1948), Box 1, folder 10). This networking may be one of the components of the longevity of the ACA as it continued across miles and between distant organization leaders.

Much networking was conducted through and around women’s organizations. Jan Addams’ Hull House in Chicago figured prominently in their concerns. The Talbot

papers contain a letter from Addams thanking Talbot for her recent visit and presentation which was organized by Richards (letter from Addams to Talbot, October, 10, 1892, Box 1, folder 12).

The subjects of this study were connected in many ways: professionally through appointments to the same institutions; through work in women's organizations; through their membership and work in the ACA; and through long-lasting friendships, many that began in their college years. Talbot who knew Brown from their years in Boston eventually sold her family home to Brown (Talbot, M. papers (1854-1948), Box 2, folder 4).

### **Mentoring**

Mentoring was another facet of the success of the subjects of this study and their students. The mentorships established by these women with their students helped keep their network strong. This study showed that effective pedagogy goes far beyond the classroom. These women mentored their students (and each other) in all areas of their lives, not just in academics.

Many of them gave their students financial assistance to further their educational opportunities. Sometimes it was a few dollars to pay for a conference or transportation. At other times it was a letter of introduction. The mentoring practices of these women affected all aspects of their students' needs including sharing their homes with students or simply feeding them regularly as Ellen Hayes did for the working students at the Vineyard School. Talbot personally paid the expenses of students who came from Constantinople to the University of Chicago and even allowed them to live in her home during their years in Chicago (Talbot, M. papers, 1854-1948. Box 3, folder 2).



They advised their students in keeping healthy and in deportment that would lead to professional success. They protected and counseled their students long after they left the classroom and thusly constructed a strong and lasting network of women helping women.

A good example of a successful mentorship is the relationship between Talbot and Breckinridge, a student who became Talbot's friend, colleague, and assistant. In her last will and testament, Sophonisba Breckinridge described how Talbot had helped her:

First of all, I want to acknowledge the heavy obligation under which I lie to Miss Talbot, Marion Talbot. I owe her all I am. I was a miserable person almost down and out when I came up to visit my classmate May Cook. She took me to see Miss Talbot, the following year Miss Talbot found a little job for me, assistant to the dean of women. This paid me, I think, \$40 a month, and beside that she arranged for me to earn my room and board first in Kelly and then in Green Hall. When a student in political science left who had something in the way of a fellowship, she asked President Judson to appoint me to the vacancy, and from that time to this, I have been a beneficiary of the university. (Breckinridge, S. P. B papers, box 1, folder 12)

Meta Kunde, another of Talbot's students wrote a thank you letter when she found a check for \$50 from Talbot in her mailbox. Her words are an example of how Talbot supported her students in their journey toward a profession:

since I am ten years old I have earned every dollar that has been spent on my education or board or clothing. Now when the rather unusual opportunity of appearing on the program with men of scientific ability at Toronto came up, I was

very happy because I knew that I could go to Toronto without feeling that I was spending more than I should. But when the meeting place was changed to New Haven I immediately knew that I should not spend the necessary amount for such a trip. Miss Talbot, I tell you this as woman to woman, I am only human and indeed I did not know that anything like this could be so hard for me to give up. I wonder if you can realize how it seems to one who has never been helped before to suddenly receive so much kindness. (Talbot, M., 1854-1948, from Kunde, M. to Talbot)

Talbot is not the only one of the subjects who created lasting friendships with her students. As mentioned earlier, Freeman Palmer kept a notebook containing information on all of the students who entered Wellesley College during her presidency. Every piece of memorial writing I found in the archival files of these women included statements of how they touched and changed the lives of their students.

### **Legitimizing Women's Areas of Expertise**

One of the successful strategies used by these subjects to open the doors of higher education for women was brilliant in its simplicity. They simply legitimized and professionalized work and concerns that were located within the feminine sphere of society. Clifford (1982) said "An alternative door opened to women faculty when a college or university created a program, department, or professional school in which the majority of students would be female" (p. 15). Some of those areas were children's education, household sanitation, home economics, public sanitation, and ecology. Women as teachers had been in charge of the education of children as an extension of their household and family duties for more than half a century by the time the ACA was

founded in 1881. Often, the only education the teacher had was at the junior or high school level. In fact, several of the subjects of this study, such as Freeman Palmer and Richards, worked as teachers after their own schooling to earn money to attend college. Female teachers, if educated beyond primary school, received their education at normal school or seminaries for women.

Still, a normal school or seminary education was not on a par with the college educations reserved for men and this was of great concern to the founders of the ACA. Freeman Palmer rejected women's colleges for her education. Instead, she chose the University of Michigan which was coeducational because she wanted the same quality of education that men received (Palmieri, 1995). Freeman Palmer accepted the position of president of Wellesley College with the expressed intent of raising that institution from the level of a female seminary to a college that rivaled Harvard for the quality of education.

The next step after improving the quality of higher education for women was to create space for women in the academy. At Chicago University, Talbot lobbied for and created a department of domestic science which eventually became Sanitary Science and made room for female faculty and students at the university (Talbot, 1936). Clements (1977) argued:

To Talbot, finding a place to fit into society was as important as the education itself. She herself went about finding this place by scheming a way in which women could fill their traditional home-tending roles in a modern and socially-conscious way. She created a plan which was half conservative, in its affirmation of the traditional role, and half radical, in its insistence that women's importance,

and their rights, be recognized. (p. 25)

Richards, in trying to make space for women (and herself) at MIT turned to the areas of science that most men were not interested in pursuing. Her interests in public sanitation led to ground-breaking work in clean water, home sanitation, and other areas of home management including home economics.

While these women were creating domestic science departments, Frisby and Dean were attending to areas of medicine that did not interest men. Those areas included women and children's health and the care and health of the mentally ill and mentally challenged. Both women became experts in the field of the mentally institutionalized and earned high ranking posts in that area of state government.

### **Summary**

The subjects of this study were able to create professional careers for themselves using a variety of strategies and tactics that relied on family support and a rich network of colleagues, students, women's organizations, friends and acquaintances. At the center of this network was the relationship between the seventeen women who met in 1881 to imagine and then create the ACA.

As they built careers for themselves, they were ever mindful of the need for a well-conceived, forward-looking strategy that would eventually open the doors to higher education for women of the future. Hazard (1925) stated that

Mrs. Palmer saw the time had come for laying the foundations of a college administration which should include not only direct influence, but should guide and coordinate the efforts of others into an effective whole. With the insight of a pioneer, she seized strategic points, not only laboring for the

college alone, but organizing fitting schools, which should fulfill college requirements of preparation. (p. 197)

That collective strategy included the idea that good minds need healthy bodies and support through mentoring. It also recognized the need for women in places of leadership and power and strategized placement of their colleagues and students in positions of leadership in educational institutions across the nation. By making strategic recommendations for placement of women who would be successful, they made access to these institutions a little easier for women. The next section will explore the connections between these women that wielded great influence on the success of this strategy.

**RQ 3: What professional and social connections brought these women together and what kind of relationships existed between the women?**

This question proved to be the most difficult to answer due to limited data for some of the subjects. The primary method of communication for these women was, of course, letter writing. Sadly, few of the letters written or received by these women still exist. However, with the limited clues found in the data, we can conclude that professional and social relationships did exist between them.

For instance, Marion Talbot's personal papers were preserved and in them we find many connections to some of the other women in addition to her personal and professional relationship with Freeman Palmer. For example, Cushing came to Chicago with Freeman Palmer to visit Talbot and assist with organizing living quarters for the female faculty and students (Talbot, M. papers, 1854-1948, Talbot to Dr. and Mrs. I. T. Talbot, September 25, 1892). Talbot gave a presentation on the history of the ACA to the Milwaukee branch where Frisby was active (Milwaukee AAUW historical records) and it

seems likely that this is evidence of their continued relationship. Talbot also sold her family's home in Boston to Alice Brown many years after the founding of the ACA.

According to Palmieri (1995), Freeman Palmer began establishing her "educational empire" (p. 24) while still a student at the University of Michigan. Her relationship with President Angell led to her appointment to Wellesley College (Palmer, 1908; Palmieri, 1995) and eventually the presidency. When she became president she filled the ranks of faculty with her friends, bringing six of her "Ann Arbor comrades" to teach at Wellesley including Anna Morgan and Lucy Andrews (Palmieri, 1995, p. 24). She also assisted Talbot in obtaining a position at Wellesley College. Freeman Palmer's "educational empire" extended to her students as well. Palmieri (1995) described her method of winning their loyalty:

Yet Freeman commanded her loyal following not through magic but by the artful wielding of her gender-based power, combining her firsthand knowledge of women and college life with a discrete concern for each woman. In keeping with her theory of heart culture, she made each student feel her warm personal interest and encouraged "each woman to do her own thinking and to have respect for the process." Such individualized treatment required constant attention to details. Freeman achieved an intimate relationship with more than three hundred Wellesley students by keeping a memorandum book by her bedside in which all the names of the freshman class were listed. She annotated it every night with information acquired about each student and studied these notes as assiduously as her students were expected to study their lecture notes (p. 27).

Freeman Palmer used this knowledge and her innate concern for her faculty and students to develop a network of loyal friends who supported her endeavors.

One of the original mysteries surrounding the subjects of this study that intrigued me and that I wanted to find an answer for was simply how these particular seventeen women ended up in that first meeting which led to the founding of the ACA. They attended a variety of colleges and universities as far away from Boston as Wisconsin so it seemed unlikely that they would be at that first meeting. Although I could not completely answer that question, I did find clues that seemed to tie this group together and make it logical that Talbot invited, not a random group of women, but this particular group.

Talbot discussed the idea of this meeting with her friend and teacher, Ellen Richards who attended Vassar College along with Florence Cushing and Alice Hayes. Frisby and Dean who graduated from the University of Wisconsin, were students under Talbot's father at the Boston University Medical School where he served as dean. Talbot attended Boston University with Sarah Miner. Freeman Palmer was a friend of the Talbots both socially and professionally and she most likely brought along Wellesley graduates Blake and Metcalf and possibly Wellesley faculty and University of Michigan graduates Andrews and Marston. Oberlin College graduates Morgan, Stratton, and Hayes were all Wellesley faculty members and part of Freeman Palmer's circle. This leaves Mary Ladd from Cornell University and Alice Brown who graduated from Smith College as the only members of the committee for whom I could not definitively trace connections with Marion Talbot in 1881 at the time of the first meeting.

Several of the friendships between these women began during their undergraduate years and extended into their professional lives. Not only were they classmates but they became colleagues as well. For instance, Andrews, Freeman Palmer, and Marston Walmsley were at the University of Michigan together. In fact, they shared an apartment for some of those years. According to Palmieri (1995), during the period when Freeman Palmer was president of Wellesley College she brought six friends from the University of Michigan to the Wellesley faculty, including Andrews and Marston. In addition to the Michigan women, another group of college alumnae spent some time as part of the Wellesley College faculty. Several graduates of Oberlin College went to Wellesley including Morgan, Ellen Hayes, and Stratton. In addition, Talbot taught at Wellesley before heading west to Chicago. The relationship between these women was also scholarly. In some instances they co-authored books and worked to develop curricula for various programs, especially in the areas of domestic science and sanitation.

Another facet of the friendships among this group of women is often referred to as Boston marriages (discussion of Boston marriage in the Andrews biographical profile). Palmieri (1995) argued that the relationship between Andrews and Freeman Palmer was a Boston marriage.

Whether these women were in marriage-like relationships or not, they socialized and vacationed as a group. Of the seventeen women, only four were married: Freeman Palmer, Marston Walmsley; Blake Pingree, and Swallow Richards. The others chose their careers over marriage and children (Palmieri, 1995). Palmieri further stated “Confirming to the dictates of society, the first generation of scholars entered the academic world as nuns entering a convent – with the explicit assumption of renouncing



marriage” (p. 98). Talbot’s devotion to the University of Chicago illustrates this career as marriage pathway. In fact, Rosenberg, 1982, stated that Talbot’s friends viewed her decision to accept a position at that university as “a kind of marriage and provided her with silverware, dishes, and linen as going away presents” (p. 27).

This dedication to their professions no doubt led to the many contributions they were able to make to higher education. They lived in a time when it was not believed that women could have it all. It is possible and even likely, that their friendships allowed them to travel and be out in the world with friends instead of male companions.

The lifelong friendships between these women are evident in the memorial speeches and publications published after their deaths. For instance, Talbot was called upon to write a memoriam for Richards and spoke at the memorial ceremony for Freeman Palmer held at the University of Chicago (Talbot, M., 1854-1948, Memorial Meeting, February 23, 1903).

In the next section the many accomplishments of each of these women working both separately and together is reviewed. As a group, they worked toward improved conditions for women in higher education and the list of their accomplishments and contributions is long. The collective achievements of this group of women add another layer to the collective biography of their lives.

#### **RQ 4: What contributions did each of these women make to society and higher education?**

The contributions of the subjects of this study add up to an impressive list of accomplishments even given the limited available data concerning their professional lives. The combined list of their “firsts” is equally impressive. The compilations below

can only be viewed as partial lists since it is unlikely that records of all of their many accomplishments have survived over a hundred years of neglect of the history of women. At least 42 books were published by the subjects of this study. Below, in Table 7, is a list of the author, title, and date published of each book I was able to locate and verify. The authors are listed alphabetically for ease of access.

Table 7

*A List of the Published Book Titles and Dates for Each Subject*

Authors	Titles of Books	Dates Published
Almah Frisby (with H. Snyder & A. P. Bryant)	Losses in Boiling Vegetables and Composition and Digestibility of Potatoes and Eggs	1897
Alice Hayes	My Leper Friends	1891
	The Horsewoman	1903
Ellen Hayes	Lessons in Higher Algebra	1881
	Elementary Trigonometry	1896
	Algebra for High Schools and Colleges	1897
	Calculus with Applications: An Introduction to the Mathematics of Science	1900
	Letters to a College Girl	1909
	Two Comrades	1912
	Wild Turkeys and Tallow Candles	1920
	How do You Know? A Handbook of Evidence Inference	1923
	The Sycamore Trail	1929
Edith E. Metcalf	Rich Folks and Poor Folks	1892
	Letters to Dorothy from the Bible	1893
Anna E. F. Morgan	Philosophical Studies in Literature: The White Lady	1889
	The Bellecycle: A Drama of Aesthetic Athletics	1897
Alice F. Palmer	Woman and the Higher Education (with co-authors)	1893
	Why Go to College?	1897
	A Marriage Cycle	1915
Ellen H. S. Richards	The Chemistry of Cooking and Cleaning: A Manual For Housekeepers	1882
	The Science of Nutrition (with co-authors)	1891
	Food Materials and Their Adulterations	1898

	The Cost of Living as Modified by Sanitary Science	1900
	First Lessons in Minerals	1902
	First Lesson in Food and Diet	1904
	Meat and Drink	1905
	Health in Labor Camps	1908
	The Efficient Worker	1908
	Tonics and Stimulants	1908
	Air, Water, and Food from a Sanitary Standpoint	1909
	Euthenics, the Science of Controllable Environment: A Plan for Better Living Conditions as a First Step Toward Higher Human Efficiency	1910
	Laboratory Notes on Industrial Water Analysis: A Survey Course for Engineers	1912
	The Cost of Food	1913
	The Cost of Shelter	1913
	Good Lunches for Schools without Kitchens	1917
Marion Talbot	Moral and Religious Influences as Related to Environment of Student Life	1909
	The Education of Women	1910
	House Sanitation: Manual for Housekeepers	1912
	The Modern Household	1912
	The Woman Citizen and the Home	1914
	The History of the American Association of University Women: 1881-1931 (with L. K. M. Rosenberry)	1931
	More than Lore: Reminiscences of Marion Talbot	1936

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### Firsts

The next Table is a list of the many first achievements of the subjects of this study. This list (see Table 8) is probably not a complete list of their achievements; given the gaps in the data. However, it is a compilation of the many firsts I was able to document. The subjects are listed in alphabetical order.

Table 8

*List of First Achievements by AAUW Founders*

Name	Achievement
Andrews	First Principal of Harcourt Place Seminary
Cushing	First Vassar Graduate on Board of Trustees
Dean	First Female Doctor in Montana
Frisby	First Woman on University of Wisconsin Board of Regents First Female State Controller in Wisconsin
E. Hayes	First Woman Nominated for Secretary of State in Massachusetts First Professor of Applied Science at Wellesley College
Marston (Walmsley)	First Professor of Greek/Zion City College
Morgan	First Professor of Philosophy/Wellesley College
Freeman (Palmer)	First Dean of Women/University of Chicago First Dean of Women at an American University
Swallow (Richards)	First Female Student at MIT First Female at <i>any</i> scientific college in the U. S. First Female Faculty Member/MIT First to Develop Class in Sanitary Engineering First Woman Admitted to American Institute of Mining & Metallurgical Engineers
Stratton	First Dean of Women/University of Colorado

First Chair of English Department/  
Wellesley College

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### **Founders**

This list (see Table 9) includes some examples wherein one or more of the subjects of this study worked with others to create an organization or program aimed at increasing or improving opportunities in the area of education for women and girls. I have included items only if they were given credit for the founding of the organization within the data. It almost goes without saying that their involvement in promoting education for women goes far beyond this list. It goes without saying that all seventeen women participated in the founding of the ACA, later known as the AAUW, so that fact is not included in Table 9 to make it more readable.

Table 9

*Subjects and Organizations they Founded*

<b>Founder</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Cushing	Girls Latin School of Boston (with others) Massachusetts Society for the Education of Women Society for Promoting Research among Women
Dean	Helena, Montana YWCA Helena Business Women's Suffrage Club St. Peter's Hospital, Helena, Montana
A. Hayes	Vassar College Student Aid Association
E. Hayes	Vineyard Shore School for Women Workers (with others) History of Science Society American Association for the Advancement of Science (with others) Only Woman Founder of Geological Society <i>The Relay</i> monthly Socialist publication
Metcalf	Home for Poor and Free Kindergarten in Chicago
Swallow (Richards)	Environmental Science Euthenics Family and Consumer Sciences Women's Chemistry Laboratory at MIT ACA Sanitary Science Club First University Extension Mail Order School American Home Economics Association
Talbot	Midwest Dean's Association

Tables 7, 8, and 9 illustrate the collective achievements of the founders of the ACA and serve as an illustration of an important segment of the collective biography of this group of seventeen women. The next section of this paper will address the collective biography of this group.

### **The Collective Biography of the Founders of the AAUW**

Although the above lists are impressive, the professional activities and accomplishments of these women all led to the same crowning accomplishment: the gates of academia were opened wide for women in America, but first they had to find a way to open the gates for themselves. They faced many difficulties in acquiring access to higher education including lack of access to preparation, lack of funding, and doors that were closed to women. However, they all shared the support of their families, particularly their mothers. Gordon (1997) argued that the support from mothers played an important part in gaining access to coeducational institutions. Eleven of the subjects of this study chose coeducational institutions and the remaining six attended women's colleges and universities to obtain their undergraduate degrees. However, they found themselves working together, in many instances, at women's colleges, and as founding members of the ACA to improve both access and quality of education for women. They shared an awareness of how their struggle would lessen the struggle of future women who wanted to earn college degrees.

I looked at the lives of these 17 women and I did not find a single instance in which a decision was made based solely on building their own personal careers. These women, often strategically, made professional decisions based on what would best serve their students and future women who wanted to go to college. For example, Hazard



(1925) wrote the following about Freeman Palmer: “She worked for women first, for she had a loyal love of her sex, but always with the broader view, with the hope of widening limitations, of opening closed doors” (p. 192). The same can be said for nearly all of the women who founded the ACA. Each of them found ways to open doors for women, believing that humankind would be the better for it.

Solomon (1985) argued that “At every stage of their progress, individual women persisted in exploiting opportunities” (p. xviii). If they found that women were not properly prepared for the rigors of the university, they founded Latin Schools for girls. If public opinion threatened to keep women out of the colleges and universities for health reasons, they designed physical education programs that would keep the mind and body healthy and balanced and then conducted research studies under the auspices of the ACA aimed at gathering scientific data to support their efforts.

They very mindfully created space like Wellesley College where women could learn and teach with dignity and pride. The Women’s Laboratory at MIT is a perfect example of this strategy. When the men refused to allow women to work in the laboratory with them, Richards, who knew her students needed access to a well-equipped laboratory, simply went to the women in her clubs and organizations and raised enough money to build and operate a laboratory for women. MIT could hardly refuse when she came with money in hand, despite the objections from male students.

They were also mindful of the everyday needs of women for a living wage, decent and livable working conditions, and ownership of their accomplishments. They helped open and supported schools for women workers like the Bryn Mawr Summer School and the Vineyard School for Women Workers based on the idea that educated

workers would become leaders who could negotiate better wages and working conditions for themselves.

They created whole new disciplines and university departments so that women could move up the academic ladder in areas that men were not interested in pursuing. From these initial steps they proved their ability and professional excellence which allowed them to move into previously all male disciplines and positions within academia as Ellen Richards did at MIT. This look to the future was common among these educators who sometimes accepted appointments only to further the cause of women seeking higher education or a position in higher education. In a letter to the New York branch of the ACA, Talbot stated, “we have only been trying to put up a scaffolding by which we can climb higher” (Talbot, M. 1854-1948, Talbot to New York Branch, n.d. Box 7, folder 1).

As a group, these women were mindful of their responsibility to use their education for the greater good. The goal of their work in the field of public and private sanitation and home economics was to improve the conditions of everyday life for the American public. They improved the quality of drinking water, food safety and sanitation, home cooking and food preservation practices, and many other aspects of life. The two doctors who settled in the west, Frisby and Dean, improved the conditions of state hospitals for the mentally ill and disabled as well as improving medical practices during epidemics in their towns and states. Dean helped build hospitals, a YWCA, and helped get the first woman into the United States Congress.

While they were concerned with social issues, they were also concerned with the success of their students. Most of the founders of the AAUW became educators in some

form. The data showed that their unusually involved mentoring resulted in successful students who became their colleagues and lifelong friends as well as members of a unique network of women educators spread across the nation. This network was an important power source for moving women into the academy and for addressing women's issues such as wage inequity. This network also included women's organizations as part of the power base that allowed them to change the role of women. As a group, they were active in clubs and organizations that gave women a political voice.

Finally, as a group, these women were successful. They learned to work within the system to effect change in the system. They achieved personal professional success while creating space for women to move into leadership positions. The access they created for themselves did not fade away after they were gone. They showed enormous wisdom in their planning and strategy which resulted in an unprecedented acceptance of women in institutions of higher learning.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

This archival research study has provided an opportunity for what Creswell (2007) called “learning about the experience within embedded, hidden networks, situations, and relationships, and making visible hierarchies of power, communication, and opportunity” (p. 65). The end result is a collective biography (Davies, 2006) of the educational and professional lives of women in higher education in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Another way of looking at it is that this is part of the ongoing collective biography of women in higher education and the next chapter is being written today. Finkelstein (1992) stated that “Educational historians have been the keepers of collective memory for the world of education practice and policy, revealing the evolution of the very realities that shape their consciousness, their questions, forms in inquiry, and definitions of their work” (pp. 256-257). She went on to say that future possibilities are “nested” (p. 257) in the work of historians. As Marion Talbot (1936) asserted, “History may be a tonic when courage and hope waver” (p. 143).

In many ways this study has reinforced what we already know about the issues women face in academia and the methods that work best to resolve those issues. Simply said, not enough has changed. We are still concerned about wages and working conditions and access to tenure for women in academia (Finklestein, 1992; Hill and Warbelow, 2008; Williams, 2000). Only approximately 31% of full-time tenured faculty

members are women even though more than half of all faculty members are women (Banerji, 2005; Mandleco, 2010). In addition, only 26% of full professors are women (Wolfinger, Manson & Golden, 2008). While some industries have made gains in women in leadership positions, women in higher education are still underrepresented in upper management positions (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Jones & Palmer, 2011). Jackson and O'Callaghan (2009) argued that women who do achieve management positions are "disproportionately located in 2-year colleges and less prestigious 4-year institutions" (p. 461). In fact, we may be moving backward as universities continue to employ ever-increasing numbers of non-tenured contingency or contract faculty, a majority of whom are women (Baldwin & Chronister, 2002; West & Curtis, 2006)

As Brooks (2007) argued:

A feminist standpoint is a way of understanding the world, a point of view of social reality, that begins with, and is developed directly from, women's experiences. The next step is to draw on what [we] have learned from women's experiences, to apply that feminist standpoint, toward bettering the conditions of women and creating social change. (p. 60)

The following section attempts to apply the collective experiences of the subjects of this study to the difficulties facing women in higher education today beginning with that first crucial step toward admission to the academy which, it can be argued, is developing a system of women mentoring women.

Study after study has shown that women lack effective mentoring throughout their educational and professional lives (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000; Maher, Ford, & Thompson, 2004; Rosser, 2007). Conversely, study after study has shown that one of the

most important ingredients for success in their professional lives is mentoring (Anderson, 2005; Crisp, 2009; Duff, 1999; Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011; Gibson, 2006; Ishiyama, 2007; Mandleco, 2010; Wunsch, 1994). In addition, studies have shown that men are successful due to mentoring and networking, another skill that women do not employ as well as their male counterparts (Gibson, 2006; Rosser, 2007).

Within higher education, as in most professions, mentoring is a major component in the success of women students. Gardiner, Tiggeman, Kerans, and Marshall (2007) found that women who were mentored were more likely to complete their programs, receive more grant money and promotions, and have better self-concepts as academics than women who were not mentored. Bruce's (1995) study of female doctoral students reported that mentorships offered crucial support in the areas of role modeling, professional development, and encouragement. Merriweather and Morgan (2013) argued that mentoring gives access to collegial relationships that are crucial to the development of the protégé from student to professional. Similarly, Ishiyama (2007) found that a successful mentorship for students in higher education included career support, academic/research support, a personal relationship, and problem solving. These findings were supported by studies focused specifically on different populations (Anderson, 2005; Crisp, 2009; Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011; Hamilton, Hamilton, & Rhodes, 2002; Nora & Crisp, 2007).

Rosenberg (1982) stated that women in academia cut themselves off from other women and their networks in order to succeed in the man's world of higher education and then could not develop successful networks, leaving them alone and isolated. In this study, I did not find evidence to support her statement. In fact, the data revealed multiple

examples of both mentoring and networking, many of which were created by shared activities in the AAUW arena and in collegial settings, as well as through women's clubs and organizations. Gordon (1997) argued that the policy of separatism on both coeducational and all women campuses (keeping male and female students separate) actually benefitted women because it forced them to form strong relationships with female faculty, administrators and their female colleagues. Studies show that networking leads to success and women are often left out of the network (Anderson, 2005; Dominici, Fried, & Scott, 2009; Mandleco, 2010; Scaffidi & Berman, 2011). This was not the case with the women in this study. For example, Alice Freeman Palmer insisted that her protégé, Marion Talbot be given a position at the University of Chicago. In turn, Talbot assisted and mentored Breckinridge as well as innumerable students into positions of leadership within the academic world.

Richards not only mentored her own students, she admitted her colleagues to her laboratory, shepherded them to advance degrees, and they, in return, developed home sanitation/home economics programs throughout the collegiate network across America. They co-authored books and research studies, worked together to improve working conditions and wages for women faculty, and consulted with each other regularly. They even founded preparatory schools and programs to assist girls and women in passing university admissions examinations. The data shows that if they found a need or roadblock to women's access or success in their educational pathway, they took action to resolve the problem. It was not unusual to find letters between these women advising of new positions for women and asking for possible candidates. In this way they created a

network of their students who then became colleagues and continued to extend this powerful network within their own academic realms.

We can learn from their highly successful mentoring and networking methods to improve and increase the likelihood of success for women in academia. It appears from this study, that it would be useful to establish an organized, well-planned network where opportunities and expertise can be regularly shared by female professionals and their students on a local level. Certainly, this method is employed by every other facet of the professions through dedicated organizations in every field of academics and most professions. The AAUW currently serves as a voice for women by lobbying Congress for legislation aimed at closing the gender gap in wages and working conditions as well as other issues that affect women (<http://www.aauw.org>). According to the AAUW website there are branches in every state. While that organization continues to have many successes on the national front, such as the recent passing of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, something is missing in this modern network of women. The missing piece is a strong local network at every institution and in every academic department within those institutions with a strategy aimed at achieving gender equity for our colleagues and students on a local level. While the women in this study had to rely on letter-writing to conduct their networking, it is much easier to communicate in the modern world through use of technology such as email, blogging, and other social network opportunities (Guy, 2002). We simply need to engage each other in an organized, strategic manner as our foremothers have done.

It is time for the current rhetoric concerning mentoring to become more than rhetoric. We know what needs to be done and we even know how to do it so let us, as



these trailblazers have done before, begin to create this framework for the success of women in academia. It has been more than a hundred years since these pioneers cleared the path for us and we need to follow in their highly successful footsteps and utilize the well-tested tools they left behind in our pursuit of equality for women in our profession.

As discussed earlier, the subjects of this study, for the most part, worked within the established system to create change. They sat on boards of universities and state health departments, chaired committees both within the workplace and within professional organizations, and moved into management positions such as deanships, president, and departmental chairmanships. However, they used these opportunities for more than personal resume building. They were *effective and influential* rather than chair fillers. They continued to voice their opinions until their voices were heard. Although they were always cognizant of opportunities to use the innate power in these positions to further the cause of their students and colleagues, they did not always participate in other areas of change for women. Some were not interested in joining the struggle for women's suffrage and in some ways most of them were very conservative. However, it may be that they saw a conservative approach as the approach that would be most successful in effecting change given the social conditions of the time. In fact, Richards specifically described this strategy for gaining acceptance when she stated

Perhaps the fact that I am not a Radical or a believer in the all powerful ballot for women to right her wrongs and that I do not scorn womanly duties, but claim it a privilege to clean up and sort of sew things, etc., is winning me stronger allies than anything else. (as quoted by Frankfort, 1977, p. 106)

While I am not suggesting that modern day women must (or should) assume such duties in the workplace (or any other arena), this example of Richards' strategy illustrates that the strategy should fit the situation. There is a time for activism and a time to effect change within the system. We must be ever alert for similar opportunities as we sit on committees and serve in other positions within the profession.

It became clear, as I studied the lives of these women that they seldom, if ever, said "No" to a new opportunity, even if it was inconvenient or caused upheaval in their present situations. We can learn from their success that opportunities are offered in unusual and unexpected ways and we should be ready to say "Yes!" Many of the advances made for women in academia came from a surprising challenge which one of the subjects of this study accepted. Neither Freeman Palmer nor Talbot expected to ever leave their well-established professional careers and lives in Boston; but when the offer came to help build a new university with almost unlimited opportunities for women in the newly developing Midwest, they said "Yes!" From that brave decision came one of the most important moves toward educational equity for women in American history.

Today's academic professionals should be on the lookout for similar opportunities to move toward equality. Complaining about, and yet accepting, the status quo is no longer acceptable. This study showed us that change can be affected within the system and the confines of the academic workplace.

As educational institutions move more and more toward a major dependence on contract faculty (Baldwin and Chronister, 2002; Giroux, 2009; Thedwall, 2008) who are mostly women, (Harper, Baldwin, Gansneder, & Chronister, 2001; Hill & Warbelow, 2008; West & Curtis, 2006) and begin to question the validity of tenure (Hill, 2010;

Mason, 2009; Tierney, 2002) it is within our means to assure that women are treated fairly and equitably without sacrificing our own positions. Although some of the same issues for women still exist, our modern society has developed in such a way that creates new problems for women in the academic workplace and classroom. The women in this study have shown us the way and it is our duty to proceed. I am absolutely sure they would have done so. I can just see the letters flying back and forth, and the committees forming and getting down to work to ensure that their students would enter a profession that provided a secure and livable wage and working conditions.

A major component of the power base of the subjects of this study was their considerable network of colleagues, former students, current students, and other women from family, and family contacts, and so on. They not only found positions for their students, they maintained relationships with them, both personal and professional. There is a large body of research (Bower, 1993; Maher, Ford, & Thompson, 2004; Simplicio, 2009; Tracy & Nicholl, 2006; Xu & Martin, 2011) that suggests that networking is one of the keys to success and women currently do not take full advantage of this method of power building. Jones and Palmer (2001) found that women often sabotage each other's professional progress in academia rather than promoting each other. Perhaps the fact that we have not had access to our history has allowed us to forget the importance and success of working together for a common goal beyond our personal goals.

This study revealed that we have a rich, often untapped, history of successful women within the profession of higher education who have for the most part, slipped between the cracks of history, leaving huge gaps in the historical account of education in

America. It is imperative that their stories be recorded and shared. This study is only a beginning.

There is much more to be researched and recorded including the biographies of several of the women in this study. For instance, there is no biography of Marion Talbot or of the brave women, Dean and Frisby, who went west to practice medicine or teach in the newly founded universities in what was then the “wild west.” This history of our foremothers should be researched and recorded to create a rich history and tradition similar to that which is so common for men. The list of the accomplishments of the seventeen women in this study goes on and on and yet they are seldom, if at all, in the pages of the history books. In fact, most of my visits to university archives began with me explaining who these women were that had opened the doors of the universities and colleges including the one I was visiting. Finding out who they were was a major task that took years. Without fanfare or with little recognition, these women soldiered on, working toward the goal of opening the doors of higher education to women.

Finally, this study highlighted the difficulty of locating data in archives which have, for the most part, paid little attention to the documents left behind by these (and probably most women) great leaders in education reform. Clifford (1989) argued that “academic women have been mostly ignored by biographers and historians” (p. xi). Gerson (2001) described researching women in Canadian archives as a “hit or miss affair” (p. 10) with few items catalogued beyond the file level. Many collections are just boxes full of random documents with little effort made to organize them into coherent categories that can be put into finding guides.

I encountered the same problems in the American archives I visited. The largest collection of documents I consulted was the Marion Talbot collection at the University of Chicago. The collection is made up of twelve boxes of documents separated into file folders sometimes by date and sometimes by type of document and sometimes by no apparent category at all. Most often the category is “correspondence” which means I had to read through random correspondence from letters concerning coal delivery to letters to the university president, all of which might be stored in the same box and even in the same folder.

Many of the archives I visited had little more than copies of documents held by other archives. Often, the few documents I found created more questions rather than supplying answers. Nowhere did I find a lucid, complete story of any of the subjects in this study. Scott (1999) and Gerson (2001) both pointed out that the study of women’s history must include an understanding of the archive itself. How and when artifacts came to the archive, how those artifacts are treated, and who is given access to those artifacts can either be the source of knowledge or can limit both access to knowledge and the creation of new knowledge. In other words, archives should be seen as political institutions rather than “neutral” (Buss, 2001, p. 2) storage pods. As such, they should be adequately funded and the funding should include a focus on women and other minority groups which have been largely neglected.

In fact, the various archives and archivists I visited for this study offered a variety of approaches and access that either helped or hindered my search for knowledge. Gracy (2006) pointed out that “creators of documents, users of documents, and archivists form a community of practice – the archival environment – for which social interaction creates

meaning and defines values” (p. 337). For instance, the archive at Vassar College was located in the basement behind a construction project and closed locked doors. I was asked to put all possessions in a closet, sit in a glassed locked room with only pencil and small pieces of pink paper provided by Vassar College. The archivist faced me through the windows and gave me one file at a time. I had to knock on the door and return a file to get another file. I was required to knock on his door (even though he was looking right at me) to ask to leave the room and then had to be “buzzed” back into the room. He admitted that there might be more information than the few documents I was allowed to see but said he did not have time to go get them. I could make no copies or take photographs of any document, nor would he make copies for me, and so my only record of the documents was notes I could take on the small pieces of pink paper provided.

On the other hand, Wellesley College offered both access and ongoing assistance during my visit to the archive and long afterward. When I arrived, several boxes and folders of documents were arranged on a desk for me. The archivist provided documents that I had not asked for that she thought might be helpful. If I found a reference to a new bit of information the archivist immediately began a search for further information. She also immediately began copying the documents as I requested them and when I returned home, my email was full of pdf copies of documents from Wellesley College. Since then, the archivist has conducted follow-up research as requested and sent further document copies.

These two different approaches to archival practice and access illustrate how the archive itself participates in creating knowledge and understanding of women’s history. Further, how the artifacts are catalogued (or not catalogued but simply put in boxes

without a system or detailed record) and how the artifacts are or are not included in research guides either gives or limits access for research. Some archives and historical collections charge for copies, research assistance, and in the case of some state historical museums even charge admission. This means that archives are instrumental in forming knowledge and are political in both mission and operations including access policies. Funding for archival services is also a political decision when institutions are deciding where funding will be allocated.

Scott (1999) defines politics as “the process by which plays of power and knowledge constitute identity and experience” (p. 5). The operational decisions of archives are political decisions that determine what we are allowed to know about the history of our society (in this case, women), their roles in society, and their contributions to the building of the world we live in today. Therefore, it is imperative that the archive itself becomes a part of the data when conducting archival research.

Still, there are practical steps that can be taken to create a more equitable archive of the history of women and other groups who have been neglected in our collective historical narrative. It would be a service to future researchers if the various libraries could work together to create a data bank of information on women in our profession. Of course, the funding for such projects will only be available when the institution sees the project as politically valuable. There is a “catch 22” situation here in that the public does not know what is available, or even that women were contributors to building our education system, so there is little demand for access to their archived documents. If there is little demand, there will be little funding to support cataloguing the letters and manuscripts that contain the clues to who our foremothers were.

One important thing I have learned through this study is that information is out there but it is scattered, sometimes in the most unlikely places. It takes weeks, months and sometimes years to track down one tiny piece of datum that is hidden in some archive located somewhere. These data should be gathered together in one place so that each researcher does not have to start at the beginning over and over again. That one place may be a universal digital archive with access to anyone with computer access. Additionally, the data should be properly catalogued and digitized in a way that is accessible. It serves no purpose to archive data without giving access. Once again, the AAUW is leading the way with an ongoing project aimed at organizing their archive material so it is more accessible to the public.

Not only should the biographical records of these women be completed and archived, but the stories of other women of merit should also be researched, studied, and recorded. The data in this study included the names of many other noteworthy women whose lives should become part of the mosaic of women's history through further research. In addition, women currently in the educational professions have a duty to lobby for the inclusion of such women in the historical accounts of American education.

### **Final Thoughts**

The 17 women who founded the American Association of University Women, an organization that has not only survived but flourished for over 130 years, are nothing less than amazing. It is important that their individual and collective stories be pieced together in such a way that their names and accomplishments become common knowledge. Women in higher education need a tradition of foremothers and they are just waiting to be rediscovered. The story found in the collective biography of these women



illuminates the pathways they forged for us as well as the methods and strategies they employed as pioneers in higher education for women, which may be useful and effective strategies today. Thanks to their planning and foresight, one of the most important tools they created, the American Association of University Women, still exists and continues to work within the system for educational equity. I felt proud and energized as I began to realize how much they were able to accomplish while enduring opposition and limited access to quality education. It follows that young women entering the profession of higher education would share those feelings if exposed to the lives and accomplishments of these pioneering women. Therefore, adding the stories of women in higher education to the tapestry of American history is a useful endeavor; and there is much more to discover in the archives where our foremothers are waiting.

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